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*Edited by
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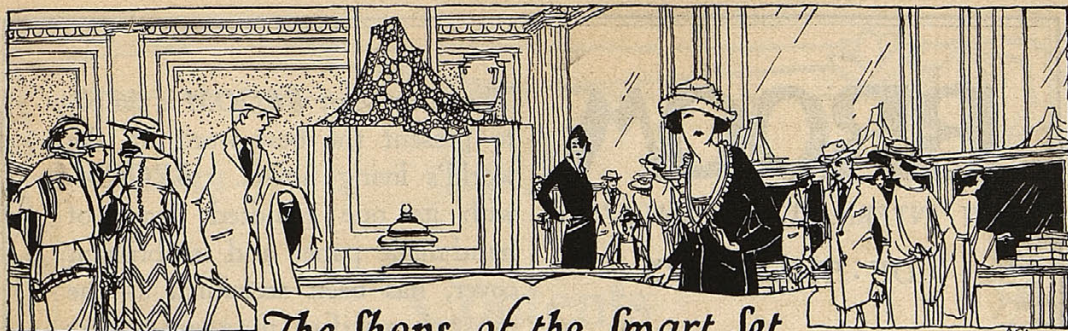
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Theme

By David Morton

THE earth has got this loveliness by rote,
Where season after season she must learn
How plum trees wear a necklace at the throat,
And aisles of shaken tulips must return;
Strange, where these poppies burn the dusk away,
And daffodils light by the feet of Spring
In paths where windy grasses bend and sway,—
That this should seem a new and matchless thing.

What ended loveliness has come to birth,
Of suns and rains conspiring, year by year,
Through all the million summertimes of earth,—
Building a rhyme too hushed for us to hear,
Whose half-completed music waits and fills
With this last line of windy daffodils.

The SMART SET

*The
Aristocrat
Among
Magazines*



Bores

By Elmer J. Williams

I

A DYSPEPTIC poet, waiting in a physician's ante-room, picked up a magazine at random and permitted his dreamy eyes to peruse these lines:

In pouring the Babbitt bearings, the shaft is inserted into the tees and blocked up so that it will be central. Both ends of the tee are dammed to prevent the metal from flowing out; this may be done by fitting a cardboard disk over the shaft—

With a soul-racking groan, the poet dropped the magazine.

II

AN automobile mechanic with a boil, sitting at the other end of the table in the same room, picked up a book and allowed his eyes to dwell on the following:

The Sun was sunk, and after him the Star
Of Hesperus, whose office is to bring
Twilight upon the earth, short arbiter
'Twixt day and night, and now from end
to end
Night's hemisphere had veiled the horizon
round—

The automobile mechanic closed the book.

"My God," he groaned.



The Test

By William Seagle

AFTER all, the radical papers may predict dissolution, poverty may stalk the land, disease be rife, science be sterile, art decadent, a library here and there be burned by vandals, robberies and murders increase, men find and proclaim a new Christ, and the world seem as desolate as at the end of the Roman era, but I shall know that civilization has not yet perished if I can walk in and submit my throat confidently to the sharp, steel blade of any barber.



Summer Shower

By John McClure

WIND in the rainswept night
Whips back the curtains. . . .

Lightning in a golden blaze
Burns old days upon me. . . .

A passionate apparition,
You return with the thunder.



THE upper classes are those that dress for dinner. The lower classes, those that dress for breakfast.



The Rise and Fall of Florrie Weissman

[A Complete Novelette]

By Marian Spitzer

CHAPTER I

FLORENZE McCABE, *née* Weissman, sat in the dining-room of her two-room hotel "suite" somewhere north of Ninety-sixth Street and gazed triumphantly at a handful of clippings and letters in her lap. [They and the constant ringing of the strident wall telephone were the tangible signs of her triumph. She had put it over. She had shown her world, that world of conceited, money-loving fools, that she could still give them a thrill; that she could still do the bizarre, the daring thing. She drew in her breath with a defiant lifting of the shoulders and a toss of her marcelled, henna'd head.

She picked up one of the clippings, already torn and grubby from much handling, and re-read it for the hundredth time.

"Heiress Flies with Chauffeur," declared the double column "freak" headline in correct journalese. Then a three-line blank—"Miss Florenze Weissman, Daughter of Prominent Manufacturer, Elopes with Martin McCabe, Family Chauffeur. Mother Prostrated. Father Withholds Forgiveness. Friends Express Surprise. Nobody in Girl's Confidence." Then the usual routine elopement story, half a column in length, and a column to the right of that lengthy treatise on "Love in a Cottage, Can It Survive?" by Winifred Winkler, the well-known sob sister. A picture of

Florenze in a riding habit and one of Marty McCabe in his sergeant's uniform completed the decorations. Florrie, as her friends called her, really didn't know how the reporter had got hold of those pictures, but he had come from a paper that had a sign on the wall intimating gently but firmly that reporters who came back without pictures were very much *non grata* in the vicinity.

That had been ten days ago. A weekend at Atlantic City after her hasty decision to marry Marty McCabe had been followed by days of hectic excitement in the rather second-rate hotel whither she and Martin had temporarily repaired. Her father was relentlessly unforgiving, but that didn't worry her at all. She knew he would come around in a little while, and for the present it was more romantic that way. Nor did her mother's alleged prostration bother her very much. That was a favorite weapon used by Mrs. Weissman to bludgeon things out of her family. And her friends fell for it just the way she expected them to. Girls she hadn't met in years, girls who had an elaborate pretense of not seeing her when they had met in the past few months, called her up and poured gallons of rapturous thrills into the telephone. A great array of men, childhood sweethearts, ex-beaux, former suitors, even a few enemies, had rallied to the new Florrie, who by her romantic elopement had

proved that she was still the old Florrie after all.

The old Florrie. That made her think. She would be twenty-five in October. This was May. Twenty-four. Young enough, as a matter of fact, yet when judged by the standards of West End Avenue and Eighty-sixth Street, not so very young for a bride. But what a romantic bride! What a stroke of genius on her part! She remembered vaguely that some Frenchman—Napoleon, she thought—had put over something wonderful once and they had called it a *coup d'état*—her history teacher in high school had put so much emphasis on it that it stayed even in her head.

CHAPTER II

Nor much history had stayed in her head those days. There was no time for such uninteresting things. Not when the telephone rang every five minutes of the day and night with some boy pleading to make a date, or some girl begging for the privilege of taking her to lunch or the theatre. Florrie was an extremely popular girl. There was every reason why she should be. In the first place she had beauty, real beauty. Her hair was brown at that time, a lovely chestnut shade, and she had not yet begun to have it waved every week. That was before the day of built-out coiffure and pulled-out eyebrows. Florrie had a good complexion, too, and spent much time outdoors, so she used rouge only at night. Her eyes were long and narrow and black, oriental in shape and color, and she had a small, delicate mouth and chin. In those days she was slim, though her curves gave promise. Altogether she was lovely. And she knew it.

In the second place, she was wealthy and generous. Ben Weissman, her father, was the vice-president of the Columbine Blouse Company, one of the largest waist manufacturing houses in America. Florenze, who at the age of fourteen had taken the C out of her

name and put in the Z so it could go that way on her graduation program, had a big allowance, charge accounts in every store, and a car of her own, which she drove exceedingly well. She gave many parties, teas, luncheons, dinners, and it brought her a feeling of queenliness to spend lavishly.

Florrie's gifts were always more expensive than anyone else's, and her parties were always more elaborate. She was the ruling spirit of the gay young West End Avenue set with which she traveled. The girls loved her and were afraid of her. She had a devastating gift of crude sarcasm and a rather bad temper, neither of which she made any effort to control. In fact, she rather prided herself on both, the former in particular, and felt that it was a symbol of her power. The boys, too, were simply crazy about her. She was so lively, so spirited, besides being pretty and well dressed and wealthy. It was a triumph to be seen at a football game with Florrie. If you were her escort to one of the periodic dances given by the fraternities and clubs of the set, you were the luckiest boy in the room.

Everybody said that Florrie would be married by the time she was eighteen. Even the girls accepted it as a foregone conclusion, and it was an indication of Florrie's power that they weren't even jealous. But Florrie said she wasn't in a hurry. She was having a good time and her requirements were high. Any man she married would have to have a lot of money.

"You know my father isn't going to give me a cent when I get married," she once told the girls of Delta Sigma, the sorority to which she belonged. It was a very exclusive sorority and when it was founded Vera Kaufman said she thought no girls should be allowed to join whose fathers worked for anyone else. But Florrie was very democratic and thought that would be unfair. She expressed herself quite plainly to Vera.

"Who in the devil do you think you are, anyway?" she said, left hand on her

hip, right one brandished fiercely in the astonished face of Vera. "I can remember the time your father was a salesman for his company, and I guess you can remember it, too. Any girl who is good enough for me to associate with is good enough for you."

Vera subsided, and they took in several rather poor girls, some of whom were actually preparing to work after they had finished school. They were very strict on one point, however; only Jewish girls were eligible.

"Not a cent," she repeated emphatically. "Anybody who marries me will have to want me for myself alone!"

And the girls nodded admiringly in agreement. Who wouldn't be glad to get her for herself alone? Not that Florrie would be easy to live with. Not with that temper. But still she was a prize.

One of the people who thought Florrie a prize was Walter Wolfson, who was familiarly known as Wolfie. And as Walter Wolfson had a fortune in his own right, inherited from his grandfather, he wouldn't need old man Weissman's money. Wolfie was twenty-four, had just been graduated from Columbia Law School, was the possessor of a *cum laude*, a Phi Beta Kappa key, a sense of humor, a Stutz racer and the homeliest face in New York. He was very tall, more than six feet, skinny, awkward. His hair was sparse and sandy, his nose long and inquiring, his mouth wide and foolish. He was desperately in love with Florrie, who thought the entire proceedings a great joke.

"My God!" she exclaimed to Leona Lowenthal one day while they were lunching at the Plaza. "He had the nerve to propose to me last night. I asked him how he had the gall to think any girl would marry him with a face like that. Think of sitting opposite *that* every morning for the rest of your life!"

Leona giggled.

"It wouldn't be only sitting opposite him," she said, leaning over the table to give Florrie a push on the shoulder.

They laughed a great deal over

Wolfie's impertinence. But Wolfie didn't mind being snubbed. He hung around Florrie devotedly, took her everywhere—dancing, to the theatre and dinner and parties. It was really for Florrie that Wolfie allowed his mother to give him a big dinner for his twenty-fifth birthday. He had very little interest in the party, but he thought it might have some influence on Florrie, make her change her mind. He knew she went around with lots of other fellows. He couldn't blame her; a girl like that, a princess, had to have lots of courtiers. Wolfie never told anybody, because it seemed so childish and silly, but he always thought of Florrie as Princess.

Wolfie's mother, who privately had no great opinion of Florrie, was a woman of considerable wisdom and kept her opinion locked within her. She called Florrie on the telephone and asked her to check up the invitation list—to invite anybody Mrs. Wolfson had overlooked. Florrie thought it would be nice to invite little Elsie Greenberg, who, as she explained to Mrs. Wolfson, was in the crowd but not of it.

"She belongs to the sorority," explained Florrie, "and it would look like a slight if she were left out. She has only one evening dress and most of the boys think she's a nut, but Wolfie seems to like her. She's studying law and whenever we have a party the two of them talk about nothing else all evening. She's not bad-looking, either, but she doesn't know how to dress and she won't use makeup. Says she's too young; wants to save it for when she needs it. Poor kid."

Wolfie's dinner and dance was a marvelous affair. There were many speeches and much wine and a wonderful orchestra for dancing. Everybody, even little Elsie Greenberg, who managed to look very pretty in the old Alice blue evening dress which did wonders for her eyes and hair, was happy. Everybody, that is, but Wolfie. Wolfie was in the depths of despair. Florrie had turned

him down again, flat, and in no uncertain terms.

"Listen, Wolfie," said Florrie, angrily, because he had taken her away from a new one she was just on the point of landing. "I'm telling you once and for all, no! I wouldn't marry you if you were the last man on earth. In fact, I don't think I care to see you any more." She giggled slightly. "Why don't you marry Elsie? She's got brains; she's not a dumbbell like me."

And Florrie was off to rejoin the new one, with whom she had the next dance.

His name was Larry Silverston. He was an unusually good-looking youth of the "clean-cut" variety, and he was not at all insensible to Florrie's charms. Florrie was radiant in a new dress, silver cloth backed with green and covered with green tulle. She had had her chestnut hair marcelled for the occasion, and the hairdresser had suggested that she try the new eyebrow shaping treatment, which was the latest word from Paris. So she looked very chic and Frenchy with the sweep of her eyebrows reduced to one arched line. Larry Silverston, she observed, was falling with a dull thud. Already he had asked for her telephone number and had promised to call her up the next day.

CHAPTER III

WITHIN two weeks they had a violent "crush" on each other. Larry telephoned every night and Florrie called Larry faithfully every noontime at his father's office, where he worked. They saw each other almost every day, and the crowd never invited one to a party without inviting the other.

Along about Christmas time Florrie appeared at high school wearing Larry's fraternity pin. The girls smiled and said "I told you so," and asked her when she would announce her engagement. When the sorority met on Sunday afternoon, somebody suggested that the first member to be engaged should get a silk underwear shower from the girls. But Florrie wasn't at all fussed.

She was used to that sort of thing and rather enjoyed it. She was really crazy about Larry, though. There was only one thing she didn't like about him and that was his family, especially his sister Helen, whom she knew from school. Helen looked very much like Larry, although she had a wooden sort of face and a wooden sort of mind and disposition. Florrie had a feeling that Helen and Mrs. Silverston were urging Larry to rush her, because they were anxious to annex some of the Weissman social standing. That was why she didn't feel at all sure about marrying Larry, who would unquestionably ask her some day soon.

Nevertheless she enjoyed the affair. It was nice to wake up in the morning with the thought of Larry on her mind, to idle through three or four periods of school thinking about him. Lots of times when the algebra teacher would be explaining a difficult new problem Florrie would sit and scribble Larry's initials on a piece of paper. Sometimes she would write his name, or hers and his together, and she would try various combinations, just for the fun of seeing how they looked. "Larry Silverston; Mrs. Laurence Morton Silverston; Mr. and Mrs. L. Morton Silverston; Florrie W. Silverston."

Once Leona Lowenthal looking over her shoulder to see how an example worked out, caught her at her scribbling, and at noontime the whole crowd with whom Florrie ate her lunch knew about it. When they went out to Diamond's Delicatessen, where they bought large and expensive sandwiches, they teased her about it. Helen Silverston, who was with them, didn't say anything, but she looked exceedingly pleased.

Very often Larry managed to get away from business and meet Florrie in front of the jewelry store on the high school corner. If you were very clever, which Florrie was, you got a lunch pass and then simply forgot to come back. Forged notes the next day accounted for the absence. It was easy to get away with things on the Warleigh authorities,

who were very severe with anyone they caught, but who caught comparatively few. Florrie knew she could keep on putting it over. It happened one day, quite by accident, that Miss Rosenberg, who sometimes substituted in the English department, saw Florrie and Larry walking on Riverside Drive at a time Florrie should have been in an English class. Miss Rosenberg, who took a personal interest in Florrie because she knew the family, and who had a strong sense of duty, mentioned it the next day when she reported in the Warleigh office for duty. In due process of time it reached the ubiquitous ears of Miss MacDay, the school disciplinarian, who felt that this incident, plus the eight salmon cards (indicative of bad behavior) filed in her cabinet to the young woman's credit, warranted an interview. The interview was brief and to the point. Florrie, taken by surprise, expressed herself characteristically.

"They *act* like damn fools," she said in a plainly audible undertone; "why *aren't* they?"

Miss MacDay did not appreciate the humor of this characterization of the Warleigh faculty, and Florrie was dismissed from the school without further ado.

"Thank God!" she breathed fervently, "now I can go to art school."

Florrie had always been interested in fabric and line and color, and she often made dresses for herself and lampshades and sofa cushions for her room. She had always had the feeling that she would develop into a first-rate interior decorator if given the opportunity, but her father had insisted, mistakenly, on her graduation from high school.

"First you get through one thing," was Ben Weissman's steadfast reply to all pleas for the art school program. "I never had an education and I want my children to have what I missed. After you finish Warleigh, if you still have the crazy idea in your head, then we'll talk about it."

"Well," thought Florrie, "now that I'm kicked out of school he'll have to let

me do something. I'll register at the Academy on my way home and then he can't stop me."

But Ben Weissman, who was a mild enough man, and who adored Florrie immoderately, didn't try to stop her. He gave her a check with which to pay her tuition at the Art Academy and spoke jokingly of her artistic ambitions.

"Now," he said, patting her on the shoulder, "let me see you set the Hudson River on fire. And never say I stood in your way when you wanted to become an artist. I guess this new fad won't last long. Anyway, maybe you'll go in for a matrimonial career pretty soon. What about it?"

"Oh, shut up, Daddy," exclaimed Florrie, "I'm really serious about this work. Dotty Arnstein says she can get me a place in her father's galleries after a while. And I'm not thinking of getting married for a long time."

Florrie was nineteen at this time, and she figured it would be at least two years before Larry would be making enough money to support her in the manner to which she was accustomed. She talked over the art school with him and he seemed to share her father's opinion that her enthusiasm was fleeting.

"Oh," he smiled, "you'll soon get tired of that. Fooling around with a lot of short-haired girls and long-haired men. You'll be glad to quit; you'll see."

Florrie was furious.

"You make me sick," she said irritably. "Just because your sister is a little bonehead you think everybody else in the world must be one too. You talk as though you'd been reading a story about Greenwich Village. Can't you see I'm serious?"

Larry was contrite. He was genuinely fond of Florrie and planned some day to propose to her if he could ever live up to her demands. She was an expensive "crush" and she would certainly be an expensive wife. Why, her bill at Maillard's every month was bigger than his weekly salary. She really ought to cut down on that stuff, aside from the money, he thought, because

she was beginning to show the faintest signs of increasing flesh under the chin and in the upper arms. He'd noticed it the other evening when they went out in evening clothes. But he knew better than to call her attention to it; he had unwittingly brought enough tirades down on his head without beckoning to one with his eyes wide open. So he said nothing, and didn't even openly resent the remark about Helen. He knew she wasn't especially bright and he knew that she and Florrie couldn't hand each other much, and he had no intention of getting mixed up in any girls' feud.

"I'm sorry," he said penitently. "I know you're serious, and I admire you for wanting to do some real work. It won't make any difference between us, will it?"

"Not if you mind your P's and Q's," replied Florrie briskly. "But I don't want any funny business from you, young man. Remember, you aren't the only fellow in New York who likes me. I can get along better without you than you can without me. Why, all I have to do is whistle and Walter Wolfson will come running back to me. Poor sap! I'll hand him one thing, though: he never was as fresh as you are."

For a moment she was lost in thought.

"He's running around with Elsie Greenberg, now," she said parenthetically. "They're a great looking pair."

Again she was silent, reflecting on her last remark.

"I must give her a ring tonight," she said presently. "She's a little simp and she'll spill everything she knows. Wolfie hasn't called me up since his dance. I told him then I didn't want to see him any more, but I did think he would call me up to find out what I meant."

When she did call Elsie Greenberg on the telephone, Elsie's voice sounded strangely excited.

"Isn't it a coincidence," she said. "I was just going to call you. I have something to tell you. Wolfie and I are engaged, and we both want you to be

the first to know of our happiness. We feel we owe it to you."

"I'll say you do," was Florrie's reply. "Well, it didn't take him long to recover, did it? I'll give a luncheon for you, and I guess the girls'll have to come across with that underwear shower. What kind of an engagement ring have you got?"

"Oh," said Elsie, "I'm not going to wear any. I don't care for them."

Florrie was overwhelmed.

"What's the idea?" she asked; "I never heard of such a thing. Why, people'll think he can't afford to give you one. What are you trying to do, act Bohemian? I suppose you won't wear a wedding ring, either. It's disgusting!"

"I certainly won't give a luncheon to a girl who refused to wear an engagement ring," she said later to Larry. "She just wants to be different. Whoever heard of a Jewish girl running around without an engagement ring? Doesn't she know everybody'll talk about her? Just think, she's engaged to the man I turned down!"

CHAPTER IV

ART school was wonderful. Florrie joined classes in costume designing and interior decoration. The two classes occupied her mornings; afternoons she met Larry, who got away from the office whenever he could, or she walked on Fifth Avenue with the girls—shopping, dawdling hours over salads and muffins and caramel ice cream cake at Schrafft's, experimenting with new kinds of facial cream and things at expensive beauty parlors. At least that is what she did for the first few weeks at the Academy.

It was not long, though, before she began to make friends with the other students. Especially those in the costume designing class, who were particularly interesting. At the drawing-board to her left sat a girl called Bubbles Benson, a little fluffy creature with auburn hair and a hard, pretty face. Bubbles had already made a number of

costume plates for theatrical productions and had an offhand acquaintance with a good many Broadway people. She talked about these in a chatty, casual way to the boy across the aisle, who also seemed to know them.

Florrie was thrilled by this contact with theatrical life, even though it was vicarious; and it was not long before she had won Bubbles completely by her generous attitude regarding lunch checks in the little tearoom downstairs. In a few weeks they were inseparable, to the alarm of Mrs. Weissman, who had been opposed to the art school idea from its inception. Too much learning was bad for girls. Especially this artistic stuff. It gave them ideas and nobody was good enough for them.

"Please, Florrie," she urged anxiously one day about four months after Florrie had entered the Academy, "I wish you wouldn't run around with that Benson girl all the time. And those fellows. You know I don't like you to start anything with Gentile boys. Not that I have anything against them—they may be very nice boys, but the first thing you know you might fall in love with one of them, and then what a mess there'd be. It would break my heart if you married a Gentile. Tim Callahan! My God! What would my friends say?"

Florrie frowned and flung about petulantly.

"What do I care what your friends would say! And I'm not marrying Tim Callahan, anyway. He hasn't got a cent. But I'm going to run around with him and Bubbles just as much as I please. They're interesting and they know a lot of interesting people, and I enjoy them. So there's no use in your carrying on about it, or forbidding. If you forbid me you'll only force me to do it on the sly."

Tim Callahan was the slender, reedy youth who sat across the aisle from Bubbles. As a matter of fact, they were engaged, they told Florrie, but she didn't let her mother know this. It would do the old lady some good to

worry a little. Might take some of the fat off. Although, Florrie admitted unwillingly and quite privately, she herself was getting a bit heavier than she liked. Staying up till all hours and eating late suppers might take its toll, but in her case it didn't take any flesh.

Florrie began to attend the Turkish Bath quite regularly, and made a faint gesture in the direction of dieting, but nothing really happened. She was having too good a time to worry, though, about a little thing like gaining weight. Bubbles and Tim were great, and Tim had a friend named Dick Harmon, a theatrical press agent, who fell hard for Florrie the first time he met her. The four went around together a great deal, spending many hours and considerable money at dancing places and restaurants where the theatrical crowd played around. Once in a while Florrie, who still saw Larry, brought him along, and on these occasions Dick brought a girl from his endless gallery.

Larry didn't care much for Florrie's new friends, but he was still very fond of her and liked to be with her at any cost. Besides, he somehow had a feeling that she might need his protection. He bored Florrie a great deal just now, however, and she treated him rather badly when they were together. She was crazy about Dick Harmon, and Dick was crazy about her, and even when Larry was along they made him feel sort of in the way. Dick thought her work was very good, and promised that when his chief came back from the road with the new show, he'd introduce her, and maybe they could use some of her designs. In the meantime it was wonderful to be right in the thick of things, to go to opening nights, and to talk the smart patter that stamped one as an insider in the theatrical world.

She didn't see her old crowd very much. She felt miles beyond them, with their silly dances and dull parties. She knew they were shocked and hurt at her new attitude, but she knew also, from the way they acted when she did

see them, that they were more than a little envious of the interesting life she was leading.

She felt, too, that she could still rule them. It was comfortable to feel that in case she ever got tired of the new crowd she could step right back upon her throne and queen it as she always had. She still ran Larry, who was frankly miserable over her, and awfully jealous of Dick Harmon. He didn't think Dick had the proper respect for her, or he wouldn't take her out with questionable girls, or, to be more exact, with girls about whom there was no question. The last straw was piled on when Toots Tucker, a wild-eyed little ingenue from a show Dick was handling, ordered whiskey straight, and consumed it at one gulp.

Larry didn't say anything at the time, but just before they reached home he found the courage to mention it. He thought Florrie was cheapening herself by going around with such a crowd, and begged her to cut it out before it was too late.

"The old gang is talking about you now, as it is," he pleaded miserably. "They think you're getting fast, and they think I'm a fool for hanging around."

"Oh, they do," coldly. "That the way you feel, too?"

"Certainly not, Florrie, but you know—" She cut in on his explanation.

"'Cause if you do you needn't hang around any more. As a matter of fact, I can get along fine without you. I'm perfectly capable of taking care of myself, and I don't want any advice or sermons from you."

"But, Florrie, you don't understand!"

"I understand all right," the angry voice rising shrilly. "I understand. You're too damn superior, that's what I understand. You and your sister. Ever since she married Leonard Goldsmith she's been so Ritzy that no one can stand her. Who does she think she is anyway? And you! I've had enough of you. You can go to the devil, both of you."

Larry tried vainly to interrupt the angry avalanche.

"Thank God I never got engaged to you. I might have married you then without finding out what a pill you were."

They had reached her door, and with a furious gesture she unfastened the fraternity pin from her dress and flung it to the floor.

"Here's your damn pin," she almost shouted.

As Larry bent toward the floor, searching for the pin in the dim light of the hall, Florrie moved toward the door, and with a violent slam stepped into the foyer and out of Larry's scheme of things. Her mounting frenzy of anger was in no way checked by the appearance of her mother, who spoke reproachfully when she came in.

"It's awfully late, Florrie," she began, but the girl cut in brusquely.

"For the love of Pete, don't you start!" she said, hysterically. "I've had enough for one evening."

And she ran down the hall into her own room, where she burst into tears of rage.

She would show him, preachy little fool! The nerve of him, dictating to her. She thought things out as she prepared for bed, rubbing cold cream on her face and carelessly jabbing a bone pin into her hair to confine it for the night. She had given up brushing it some time ago. Brushing took the wave out, and one afternoon a week was all she could spare at the hairdresser's.

Dick Harmon was crazy about her. It wouldn't take much manœuvring on her part to make him propose. He'd been on the verge of it a half dozen times. Well, she would soon be engaged to him, soon be married to him, and maybe it would be a double wedding. What a lucky thing she hadn't married Larry! Why, Dick made more money than Larry, and he *wasn't* working for his father. And her folks couldn't even kick on religious grounds, because Dick's father had been Jewish and had brought up his son in the faith. Not

that he believed in anything, but at least it was technically all right.

CHAPTER V

By the time she was in bed, Florrie was quite happy. Life with Dick would be quite amusing and exciting, something new all the time. She'd show the old crowd what she thought of them, how much they mattered to her. She wasn't kidding herself that she felt any romantic, spiritual love for Dick. But they got along very well; they understood and amused each other; and she liked the way he kissed her. He was very good-looking, too. Things were coming out fine.

She didn't know exactly how she would work it. Naturally she couldn't propose to him herself, but he was always making love to her, and now if he knew Larry was definitely out of the way, he would probably do something. He had always teased Florrie a great deal about Larry and said she'd marry him some day and settle down and get fat like all Jewish girls. Florrie had always bridled a little at this; she didn't like being reminded that she was growing heavier. Well, now he'd see. She'd begin reducing right away. No more caramel almond sundaes, and she'd cut out breakfast altogether.

She had an engagement with Tim and Bubbles and Dick that night. They went to the theatre and then dancing at the Royal Gardens.

Florrie dressed with special care that night, remembering her resolution to bring Dick to the asking point. She wore a black satin sleeveless dinner dress, lined and bound with cerise. Florrie had made this dress herself and was very proud of it, because everybody thought it made her look quite thin. It was a one-piece affair, rather loose, with a rope silk girdle confining it casually, a little below the waistline. The skirt, which was quite short to begin with, had a tendency to climb. Satin always did that, she thought, as she gave it a little tug, but then, she had nice legs;

so why not show them? Round-toed French slippers, with three straps and a very high heel, made her feet look quite small. She wore the various pieces of jewelry that marked her various birthdays—the diamond ring her father had given her on her sixteenth birthday; the bar pin he had sent from Paris on her seventeenth; the set of flexible bracelets, diamond and sapphire, that had added lustre to the already glittering eighteen; the platinum and seed pearl sautoir that had doubled the joy of arriving at nineteen. Her hair, which had by now achieved a rather incredible shade of henna, was freshly marcelled, although it was slightly before her regular day with the hairdresser.

She surveyed herself approvingly in the long mirror as she gave a last conciliatory pat to the rigid mountain of ripples that stood out like a fan around her face. Dick would like her very much tonight. Thank goodness, she was still pretty, even though it was now necessary to use rouge in the daytime, and advisable to wear a chin strap at night. But if she held her head very high you couldn't see the slight billowing of flesh under the delicate chin. And the subdued light in the Royal Gardens did wonders for the complexion. She was particularly anxious to look young and pretty tonight, not alone because of Dick, but because Gus King, Dick's chief, who was back from the road, was going to join them late in the evening. And she wanted very much to get in right with him because he could absolutely make her famous as a costume designer if he wanted to. And she knew he would do anything for a girl if he happened to like her looks.

Dick was more than usually attentive that night. He looked at her hard all during the play, and scarcely watched the stage at all. During a dark scene he took hold of her hand, and when the lights went on again he forgot to let go. Several times he sighed.

"A penny for your thoughts," Florrie asked him playfully during an intermission.

He smiled significantly, it seemed to her.

"Oh, I'll tell you later," he replied, "but they're really worth a lot more than a penny."

Florrie didn't pay much attention to the last act. She was too busy thinking ahead and wondering just how he would do it. It would surely be tonight. How surprised her folks would be. She had mentioned Dick frequently in her conversations at home and she had got into the habit of meeting him at the theatre instead of having him call for her.

Well, by the time she got home that evening she would be engaged, probably. Thank goodness, that would put an end to her mother's constant reproaches and her father's constant teasing. And to that slightly hunted feeling she had been having lately when she read the engagement column in the *Times*, which each Sunday heralded the betrothal of another of her former intimates.

They had a hilarious time at the Gardens. Florrie drank two cocktails but they had no effect except to heighten the excited flush that crept outside the careful edges of her rouge. At one o'clock Gus King came in, a thick sort of person, thick of body and of nose and of voice, and of everything but mind. He greeted them casually and was presented to Florrie, whom he inspected appraisingly and then ignored. He talked rapidly and gutturally to Dick about business on the road, and the chances for the new show in town. Then he turned to Bubbles.

"Say, Kid," he said, "we got a little part in the show we could use you in. Want to try it?"

Bubbles didn't want to try it, she hated the show business from the stage end, and anyway she was going to be married in a month. Florrie looked expectantly at him. She wondered whether she'd like the stage. Of course, not permanently, but just a little while for the fun of it. She was as good-

looking as any of the girls she had ever seen behind the scenes.

"How about me?" she asked in a careless tone, her heart beating very fast. "Got a part that you could use me in?"

Gus King scrutinized her sharply, then bent over and put his thick hand around her arm.

"You're not at all bad-looking, kid," he said kindly, "but I couldn't use you. I'll tell you, you're too. . . ."

He paused and looked toward the ceiling, searching for a word.

"You're too residential," he said in a burst of inspiration.

Florrie laughed with the others.

"Well," she said, "I really don't want to go on the stage. I just wondered." Nothing could disturb her much tonight, she was too deeply interested in hearing what Dick would have to say. She'd remind him on the way home—but he wouldn't need reminding.

Dick was drinking a good deal—more than he usually did. Tim owlishly sober, twitted him.

"Smatter, Dick, trying to drown your sorrow?" Dick looked up, sighing prodigiously.

"Yop," he said; "it's that way every time. Just when I start to get really fond of a snappy number like Florrie, who comes along but the little woman, and it's all off."

Florrie, acutely perceptive of Dick tonight, heard the words in a stabbing flash of realization. "The little woman." That meant but one thing. He was married—beyond her reach.

Her emotions, never easily controlled, swept over her, painfully, devastatingly, like a flood. Bitter disappointment at the toppling of her air-castle was swiftly succeeded by a rising tide of anger, mounting to fury. She had been tricked. Her throat, contracted momentarily by shock and temper, refused to obey her mind. For an instant she could not talk. Then she found words, frenzied torrents of them which she poured venomously over her astonished companions.

"So you're married," she said violently, in her rage neither realizing nor

caring about the clustering tables, occupants of which looked up eagerly at the promise of a scene. "Married, and you've been running around with me all these weeks and never let on. How dare you treat me like that? Trying to put something over on me, weren't you? What was your game, anyway? And you," turning to Bubbles accusingly, as Dick tried unsuccessfully to speak, "you claimed to be a friend of mine. After all that I've done for you, to treat me this way, like a common chorus girl."

Forced to stop for breath, she scarcely heard Dick, who in a genuinely regretful manner, started to explain.

"Why, Florrie," he said soothingly, "I didn't try to put anything over on you, my dear. Everybody knows I'm married, and I thought you did, too. We're all so sort of casual in this crowd, you know."

"Casual!" she flung at him, "I'm sick of hearing that word! You mean immoral! Every one of you. You're not fit for a decent person to associate with, you—bums."

An angry sob escaped her, she looked about her wildly, picked up her wrap, and flounced out of the crowded room, followed by curious eyes.

Ill-timed mirth seized the thick person of Gus King.

"Did you say she was a snappy number?" he inquired of the astonished Dick. "I'll tell the world you had her right."

"I didn't think she wanted to marry you," said Bubbles, "so what difference did it make? I would have told her about Dot, but it just never occurred to me."

"Oh, well," contributed Tim, "if she's that sort we're just as well off without her."

And Florrie, giving way completely to her rage and disappointment, sobbed great tremulous sobs, and twisted her handkerchief into a rag as she sped uptown in a taxi. By the time she reached home she was a wreck. She paid the man and went inside, walking up the six flights of stairs so that the elevator

man wouldn't see her come in alone, and in such a disheveled condition. Her parents were out, so she reached her room unobserved. She undressed slowly, trying to reflect on the occurrences of the past two days.

It was almost too much to bear. Why did people treat her that way? wasn't she generous and kind to them? Well, they didn't appreciate her, that was all. Grafters never did. Dick. What a cad, to lead her on that way and let her think he was single. Well, theatrical people were like that. . . . It was a good thing she didn't really care for Dick. Larry was right, she had no place in a crowd like that. She was too good for them. Larry. Well, tomorrow she'd tell him she had reconsidered, and had decided to give up Bubbles and her friends. He would call up, there was no doubt of that. And she would condescend to see him again if he would apologize for insulting her.

One thing was certain: nobody would be fresh with her and get away with it. She reviewed the scene in the Gardens and was pleased with the way she had carried it off.

"I'm glad I had the satisfaction of telling him what I thought of him, anyway," she told herself.

CHAPTER VI

FLORRIE stayed at home the next day. She couldn't bear the thought of facing Bubbles at school, and besides her eyes were red and swollen from crying and lack of sleep. She had laid awake nearly all night trying to think of ways to revenge herself, but it wasn't so easy. The trouble with people like Dick and Tim and Bubbles was that you couldn't offend them. They had no refinement or sensitiveness, insults just rolled off them like water off a duck's back. Why they hadn't even been angry last night when she told them what she thought of them. In fact, she had detected a lurking smile on Dick's face. Shameless! Not fit for nice people to associate with. Well, she had learned her lesson.

She ate her lunch alone, indulging herself for the first time in weeks in the matter of mayonnaise, pastry and rich chocolate. Her injured feelings had to be compensated in some way.

During lunch she tried to reconstruct just what had happened the night before last with Larry, but the more recent disturbance had crowded the details of that scene out of her mind, and she could only remember that she had given him back his pin after he had interfered with her affairs. She would wait for him to call. The chances were he'd do so during the afternoon; he often did.

But the afternoon passed slowly and Larry didn't call her. Two or three times the 'phone rang, and she flew breathlessly to it, waited an eternity to hear the voice on the other end, only to learn each time that it was someone for her mother. It was dreadful, that waiting. She took a book from the library table, but she found herself reading each page a dozen times, and looking up anxiously every other second. Then she put on a phonograph record, but couldn't pay any attention to it, because she kept listening for the sound of the telephone bell.

At about four o'clock her twelve-year-old brother, whose name was Larry, too, came upstairs and went to the 'phone to call up his friend regarding some new hiking shoes he had bought. Florrie was wildly impatient with him, although he stayed on the wire only a few minutes. Probably just at that time Larry would be trying to reach her. Still, she didn't dare say anything to the kid, who was an awful pest and would tell his mother. Not that she was afraid, but it would precipitate a lot of questions, and Florrie was certainly not in the mood for answering questions. She wondered now how she could get through the ordeal of dinner, with her mother's intolerable attitude of displeasure and her father's even more intolerable attitude of heavy humor.

She waited until a quarter after five, then, sure Larry would be on the way

home, and not likely to call, she got Leona Lowenthal on the wire and asked her to come over for dinner. Leona, whom she had not seen since a few weeks after her entrance in the academy, was surprised to hear her voice, and even more surprised at the invitation for dinner.

"You must be hard up," she said, laughing, to ask me for dinner. Do you suppose I've been sitting around all these three months just waiting for you to remember that I'm still alive? I have a date for tonight. I'm going to Helen Silverston's. She's having a little dinner party and housewarming. It's the first time she's had company in her own home since she's married. Larry's calling for me. Say," on a prolonged rising note, "I hear you gave him the gate. I know it's none of my business, Florrie, but I wouldn't be so upstage if I were you. You might find yourself out in the cold some day."

"If that's all you can say after not seeing me in five months," replied Florrie, hotly, "I guess I can go another five without speaking to you," and she hung up with a bang.

She sat in her room for a long time, thinking bitterly. She couldn't understand it all. Here she was, always doing things for other people and being nice to them, and they were always turning on her. The world was a funny place, and there certainly was no such thing as gratitude.

She got through dinner somehow, maintaining a silence that even her father's tortuous pleasantries failed to penetrate. After dinner she resumed her vigil near the telephone, enduring agonies while her mother held forth at length with Mrs. Weil and later with Mrs. Baumann on the subject of tomorrow's bridge game.

"For God's sake, mother," she cried petulantly, after Mrs. Weissman had exhausted the topic of the departing cook and had begun on the topic of the new dressmaker, "can't you cut it short? It gets on my nerves when you talk so long."

Her father looked up from *Women's Wear* with a half amused, half angry snort.

"Nerves!" he exclaimed. "What right has a kid like you got to have nerves? Not a thing to worry about, not a care in the world. Wait until you're my age, then you can talk about nerves. The trouble with you is you haven't enough to occupy your mind."

And he returned to his perusal of "Arriving Buyers."

At ten o'clock Florrie went to bed. Larry wouldn't call any more that night. Probably he tried to get her while the line was busy, and had given up for the present. She'd stay home the next day, anyhow, and make herself a new sofa cushion out of that orchid taffeta she had sent home months ago and never used. Then if he called she would be there, and still she wouldn't really be waiting for him. But he didn't call. Not all day. The 'phone never rang.

In the afternoon she wandered from room to room, looking out of the windows, trying to think of other things. But she couldn't put her mind on anything but the telephone. Why didn't he call? Was he really taking her seriously, about never wanting to see him again? Of course, when she had told him that she meant it. How could she know that Dick was a married man? Maybe Larry was waiting for her to call him. Well, he could wait. Forever. After some time she gravitated back to the telephone, and before she realized it had got his office on the wire. She asked for him, and was requested by the haughty voiced operator to give her name.

"It's a personal call," she said.

The operator replied exasperatingly that she would have to give her name, anyway. She had a feeling that the operator recognized her voice and was laughing at her. It was maddening. She told the girl her name, and waited, interminably, it seemed. Finally the girl told her Mr. Laurence Silverston was out. She didn't know whether he would be back, and wanted to know whether

there was any message. Florrie said no, and rang off.

That seemed to be the end of that. Well, thank goodness she had thrown him; he could never say that he had turned her down. So far it had always been Florrie who had terminated the affairs, even if the young men had recovered with somewhat surprising rapidity.

Mrs. Weissman, who always spent March in Lakewood, was astonished and pleased when Florrie announced her intention of leaving art school and accompanying her. They went down together and bought a great many clothes. There was always a good deal of style at Willow-in-the-Oaks, the hotel at which all the best Jewish families stayed when they went to Lakewood. And Florrie didn't want to have anybody get ahead of her when it came to clothes. Nobody ever had, and she didn't see any reason for them to begin.

It wasn't very exciting in Lakewood, but there were a few girls she had known in school, and although she didn't particularly care about them, they were all right to play bridge with, and to take walks with in the afternoon. Week-ends the boys came out from town, but there were always four girls to every man, and somehow Florrie was bored by them. She stayed with her mother a good deal, and went to bed early every night. She didn't sleep much, though.

After she was in bed she would start thinking about Larry and Dick. She wondered what they were doing, and whether they were as lonesome as she was. The funny part of it was that she didn't miss them personally, at all. It was just the going out and the excitement that she missed.

She couldn't seem to get interested in anything any more. She was blasé and ready for some new experience. She really should get married. Going over the list of her old friends, she was a little alarmed to realize how many of the girls were married or engaged. How many of the boys, in fact. And they had all expected her to be the first one.

Well, of course, she could afford to wait. She didn't have to take the first man who asked her. There hadn't been anything worth while yet. Plenty of time.

At the end of the month they went home. Florrie was several pounds heavier than she had been; they gave you so much to eat at Willow-in-the-Oaks. Her mother always had to take off her corset after dinner.

Back in New York Florrie called up a few of the girls, but somehow she missed the old cordiality in their response. It was amazing how quickly people could forget. Why, a year ago they hadn't been able to live without her, and now they scarcely remembered her. And the parties she had given, the lunches she had bought! Oh, well, life was that way. Something would happen to change the situation. Something would come along and put her back on her throne. They would see.

Something did happen very soon, which, although it didn't exactly put her back on her throne, did bring back very prominently into the more or less public attention of her friends. Of course, it did the same for a great many other people, but to Florrie it was a godsend. That thing was the war.

A week after she had come back from Lakewood, temporarily somewhat chastened, Congress arrived at its momentous decision. Florrie was thrilled beyond expression, and inspired with an excess of patriotic zeal. From the very beginning she felt that it was her own private war. She would go overseas at the first opportunity, she told her mother, who had already begun knitting on woolen socks, although, she said, her mother had been a German and she knew the Germans couldn't be such monsters as the newspapers made them out to be. Florrie was infuriated by this comment.

"Mother," she said excitedly, "if you must be a traitor, at least have the common sense to keep your thoughts to yourself. Do you want to be arrested as a German spy?"

"Well, ain't I making socks," she

replied defensively. "Thank God I have no grown-up sons. I pity the poor mothers."

"You'd better pity yourself, then," said Florrie, "because I'm going to join the Red Cross or the Y. M. C. A. or something, and get to France."

She waited defiantly, but Mrs. Weissman didn't explode or grow faint, or anything like that. She knew that Florrie was too young to be accepted for any overseas service.

Florrie, however, was prepared to lie to any extent in order to get to France. How romantic that would be. And most of those Y. M. C. A. girls were so terrible looking that she'd probably have a wonderful time. She gave herself over completely to her dreams. She would be right in the front lines, she was sure, although she was somewhat vague as to her capacity. She wondered what to take along besides her uniform. Probably ought to take one or two evening dresses, because the officers would be dying for a sight of something really feminine. And looks would count a great deal, especially after hard days in the trenches. It would be keeping up their morale to always look just so. She'd have to put in a supply of cold cream and lip sticks and powder, because you couldn't get that sort of thing near the front. Probably she'd be married to a major or a colonel or something by the time the war was over. How lucky she hadn't married one of those fool kids.

Six weeks of real but unavailing effort convinced Florrie that she couldn't get overseas. She wasn't a specialist and she was too young. Pinned down to some definite thing she could do, she said she could drive a car. They didn't need women drivers overseas, she was told at the Red Cross—they had enough, but there was a great demand for women drivers right here in New York, and her age wouldn't bar her here.

Florrie thought it over. It wouldn't be as thrilling as going overseas, but she wanted to do her duty, and if she was needed here, she felt she should stay.

Besides there were lots of stunning officers who were stationed right here, and after a while there would be men returning from France.

In three weeks Florrie was in the service. She did not join the Red Cross, however, but went into the Motor Corps of America instead. It was a much more chic outfit, she concluded after study, and besides when she tried on the Red Cross uniform it made her look rather stout.

Work in the Motor Corps was marvelous. From morning until night she was on call, ready in her smart uniform, leather boots and visored cap. She worked very hard, and had many calls, because she was an expert driver. Also her father had told her she might use her car on duty. She enjoyed the work immensely, and received many compliments from the officers for the neatness and despatch of her driving. Lots of the younger men, and some of the older ones, tried to make engagements with her, but the rules of the Motor Corps were very strict on that score, and Florrie was steadfast in her adherence to duty.

Now and then she met the girls she had formerly gone with. They looked at her enviously and had to admit that she looked stunning in her uniform. None of them had gone into any active service, although they were all doing something, rolling bandages, serving at canteens or just knitting at home.

Through the girls she heard of the boys. Larry had gone into the navy as soon as war was declared, and was now stationed at Pelham Bay in the officers' training school. Wolfie, married for some time to Elsie Greenberg, had a commission in the Advocate General's Department and was stationed down at 39 Whitehall Street. Several of the other boys had been drafted and were now in training camps or had already gone overseas. One day while driving her car she caught sight of Tim Callahan in a private's uniform. She stopped and called him—after all she hadn't

quarreled with him, and she was awfully curious about Dick.

They had both joined the old Seventh, Tim told her, as privates, and were expecting momentarily to go south, preparatory to being sent overseas. Bubbles was going into the Camouflage Corps and would stay home. They were going to be married before he left for Southern training. They talked a few minutes, in a slightly constrained manner, and Tim went on.

It must be nice, Florrie thought, to be in the service and married to a real soldier, not a slacker in uniform, like most of her old set. Not that they were all that way. Jerry Isaacs was in the Marines and had already gone over. Probably was in the thick of things by this time. And the three Levy brothers had, in spite of their name, gone right into the Fighting 69th, about whose overseas service there could be no question. They were a pretty good crowd, after all. When she got out of the service she'd probably run things again—her war record would assure that!

CHAPTER VII

FLORRIE had been in the Motor Corps a year when she met Marty McCabe. After the wounded boys began streaming back to this country a considerable part of her work lay in transporting them from ship to hospital, and it was on one of these trips that Marty first appeared. He was a gorgeous creature, well over six feet, and consistently broad. His hair was tawny yellow, his eyes dark blue, fringed in the Irish fashion with black lashes. His fair skin was tanned from months of exposure, his smile was wide and flashing. He had been gassed in Boileau Wood, he told Florrie, when she took his record. His regiment was the Sixty-ninth—he had lived all his life on East 28th Street—a pure type of New York Irish.

Florrie, in her professional manner, asked him about the Levy boys, especially Jim, who had been killed. Marty knew them well.

"Sure," he grinned, "they was pretty good guys. White men, even if they was Jews."

Florrie smiled a little, but said no more. She was interested in this handsome brute—he was just that, she decided. Not a brain in his head or a place to put one—tough, ignorant, but oh, what a face.

"Beautiful but dumb," she said to herself, thinking of a recent vaudeville gag she had heard.

Then she asked him what he would do after he was discharged from the hospital. He wouldn't be there long, his injuries were slight.

"I don't know," he replied. "Before I joined up I was in a garage, but the doctor says I oughten to stay indoors. I'd like to get a job drivin' a car."

"Well," said Florrie in a slightly less official tone, "when you get your discharge let me know at headquarters. I may be able to help you to get a job."

It was nice to feel that she could do something for the boys after they had finished fighting. And that was just as important as helping win the war. She would speak to her father about it—they would have to have a chauffeur soon, their old one had been lost when his transport was torpedoed. McCabe would look stunning in the livery the Weissmans had for their chauffeur. He certainly was a good looking man. She wondered whether he was a good driver. Well, there was plenty of time for that. By the next day Florrie had forgotten all about it.

Marty McCabe, however, had not. He had every intention of getting well and receiving his discharge as soon as possible. *Some girl!* He hadn't seen anything as classy as that in a long time. Real class. And a good figure. Not one of these here flappers, who were built like ironing boards. Marty McCabe liked girls you knew were girls. She seemed to like him, too. Well, his homecoming was better than most, and his future looked promising. He'd be out in a couple of months, and he'd remind her about that job.

He was discharged very soon, and called Florrie as she had told him to. She spoke to her father about him, and inside of a month Marty McCabe was installed as the Weissman family chauffeur. He was an expert driver, well behaved, and nice looking. Florrie was pleased, and Marty was overwhelmed by her pleasure.

Soon after the armistice was over, Florrie returned to civilian life. There wasn't much for her to do, and as a matter of fact, she was rather bored with the corps and everything concerning it. It was about time to pick up the threads of her old life. First she bought herself an entire outfit of new clothes. She honestly hadn't given a thought to such things since she first went into service, and she couldn't wear a single one of her old things, they were all too small. Hard work had agreed with her, during her service she had gained about fifteen pounds. And she had let herself go completely, she said to herself. It would take weeks to get dieted down, and hairdressed and manicured and generally groomed back to shape.

Florrie gave herself over to the dress-maker and the milliner and the beauty parlor quite exclusively for more than a month. It was during a fitting session at Mme. Jacob's, who was particularly noted for her ability to make rather stout women look rather thin, that Florrie bumped into Isabelle Aarons.

Isabelle, only daughter of a prominent and wealthy lawyer, was what is known as a perfectly stunning girl. She had a large quantity of bright auburn hair which had originally been blonde. This she always dressed elaborately, in keeping with the elaborate costumes she wore and the elaborate makeup with which she decorated her rather heavy, freckled face. Isabelle, as well as a number of other people, was under the impression that she looked Irish. She was engaged to Howard Brauer, a junior member of her father's firm, a young man of considerable financial and social standing. He was chiefly noted for having at one

time been the so-called protector of a famous "Follies" girl.

Florrie had known Isabelle slightly at school, but they had never been friends, as Isabelle was nearly two years older. However, the war had served to make people more democratic, and their long wait for the personal services of Mme. Jacobs, an extremely popular lady, brought them closer than they had ever been before. By the time they left the modiste's they made an engagement for lunch the next day.

Florrie was exceedingly pleased—Isabelle was a very worth while connection. She moved in the very best Jewish circles, and was considered something of a social arbiter. She would be getting married soon, and Howard no doubt knew lots of eligible men. If she became intimate with Isabelle she could meet flocks of people. She remembered, too, that Isabelle had a brother, DeWitt, who had joined the French Air Service early in the war. She wondered whether he was in New York. They wore stunning uniforms.

He wasn't in New York, she learned from Isabelle the next day, while they ate caramel ice cream cake and talked of dieting, but he would be very soon.

"He's on his way home now," Isabelle said, "and we're going to give him a big welcome home party. I'd love to have you come. I know Dewy'd like you. He was always crazy about red hair. And he likes a girl with brains. You know he left college to go into the service. I haven't seen him in nearly five years."

Florrie was delighted at the invitation, and made elaborate preparations for the party, which was given at the big home of the Aarons, on Riverside Drive. She looked wonderful that night, prettier than she had looked since before she had entered the Motor Corps. Mme. Jacobs, true to her reputation, created a frock for Florrie that made her look twenty pounds lighter than she was. A straight lined affair of amber crêpe meteor, paneled front and back, and untouched by any other color, it brought out the lights in Florrie's henna hair, and kept

the lines of her figure long and firm.

At the earnest behest of Mme. Jacobs, Florrie had worn a corset, although as a rule she went unfettered. The depth of her black, oriental eyes was accentuated by a suspicion of mascara on the long lashes; the swollen place just above and below the eyebrows, where the tweezers had done their painful work, was powdered carefully with the new Spanish flesh tint powder, and didn't show at all, particularly under the reflected lights of the Aarons' front parlor. Surveying herself in the long mirror in Isabelle's room, where she deposited her wraps, Florrie was entirely satisfied with what she saw.

And so, apparently, was DeWitt Aarons, whose pale blue eyes noted the vivid picture she made standing under the glow of a standing lamp. He called at once upon his sister for an introduction. Isabelle, greatly pleased, led him to Florrie, who had been watching carefully, and was concealing her triumph with some effort.

"If you don't mind me being personal," said DeWitt, with just the faintest and most delightful trace of an English accent—he had spent several months in London—"I'd like to tell you that you are the most charming looking girl I've seen since I left Paris."

Florrie, who didn't mind at all his being personal, laughed a little and told him she knew she wasn't in it compared with those French girls. But Dewy seemed to think so, and he made it his business to let her and everybody else know it. They danced together just as many times as politeness would permit, and their steps fitted as though they had been dancing together all their lives.

"That's a sure test," said Dewy, standing above her as she rested after a dance. "If we dance that well together it's a sign we're meant to be friends."

He smiled down at her, a something more than interested light playing in the pale blue eyes, a significant lift to the upper lip.

"I want to see you very often," he went on. "I think you're a ripping girl."

CHAPTER VIII

FLORRIE had no objection to seeing him often. He came to call a few nights later, and although he was not quite the dashing figure he'd been in his fascinating blue uniform, still, he was good looking, and awfully interesting. He told her about his experiences in the war, and the things he had seen and done in Europe after the armistice. He spoke of finding something to do, now that he was home.

"I thought at first that I'd go back to college," he told her, "but I've changed my mind. It would be so long before I could get anywhere. I'm twenty-five now, and haven't got a thing to my name excepting a Croix de Guerre. And my father keeps telling me that the war is over and not to trade on the fact that I've been in the big show. He won't even give me a place in his office, unless I'll go to law school in the evening. And I won't do that. I want to have some fun. He owes me something, I think! Didn't I fight for him?"

"Oh, you'll surely find something," said Florrie, "with all you've been through. In the meantime you can just play around and have a good time."

"I can have a good time, all right," said Dewy, "if you'll have a good time with me. Honestly, Florrie, it seems as if I'd always known you. You're very attractive to me. You don't know how attractive, do you?"

"No," said Florrie, expectantly, "how attractive am I?"

"I can't tell you yet," he replied, "but some time very soon I will. First I must have something definite to show you. But just having your company will mean a great deal to me now."

At first Florrie wouldn't go out with Dewy every time he asked her. She often refused, pretending she had another engagement, although there was no one else paying attention to her at the time. But there was no use making it simple for him. You shouldn't let a fellow think you're easy. Her mother had always told her that, and she had

certainly lived up to the advice. They had always had to run after her. And it seemed to be working with Dewy. He was crazier about her than anyone had been since Wolfie. Only he was better than Wolfie, and you could stand looking at him. His father had a lot of money, too, if he would only be decent to Dewy. But he seemed to be determined not to help the boy, and Florrie wished she knew him better so she could tell him what she thought of him, treating a hero that way.

It was wonderful to have the 'phone ringing at regular times every day, the way it used to, and to go to the theatre and dancing up the road. She and Dewy went two or three nights a week. Mr. Weissman was nice about letting them have the car, Marty McCabe, inwardly writhing, almost quit the job after his first experience driving for Dewy. But Miss Florrie was so sweet to him, and if he left he couldn't see her any more. So he stayed. Sometimes they went alone, but more often with Isabelle and Howard Brauer, whom Florrie didn't like. He was an awful snob, and she felt he was trying to influence Isabelle against her. But it didn't seem to make any difference. Isabelle was wonderful to her, and appeared delighted at her friendship with DeWitt.

"I told you he'd fall, didn't I?" she asked. "Wait, you'll see—we'll be in the same family yet, if you want to be."

And she was right. One night, about a month after the coming-home party, as they were driving out on the Merrick Road, it happened. The sky was heavy and unlit, the only illumination coming from passing cars.

"How unromantic," said Florrie lightly, "not even a moon."

Dewy turned to her swiftly and kissed her thoroughly.

"I don't need a moon to be romantic," he said. "I'm too romantic as it is. Florrie, I'm crazy about you; have been since the first moment I saw you. Will you marry me? I know I have an awful nerve to ask you when I haven't even a job, but knowing that you care for me,

and will wait, will make me so much more ambitious. Will you, dear?"

Florrie breathed again.

Engaged, at last.

"Yes, I'll wait. Only don't make me wait too long. I'll tell you, I'll speak to Daddy, he can probably use you in his place, or help you get something with one of his friends. Will you mind if I ask him?"

It was a bad way to begin, Dewy said, but he reluctantly consented to the plan.

"Then we can announce it right away," said Florrie, joyously.

How wonderful it was! What a marvelous boy Dewy was! She had been waiting for him all these years, and never knew it. She was desperately in love with him.

"You know," she said, squeezing his arm happily, "I used to say I wouldn't marry a man unless he had lots of money. But I'd marry you on thirty dollars a week. And I'd do all the housework and everything. I'm going to learn to cook, so we won't have to keep a maid."

He'd never get married that way, Dewy said. His wife do the housework! Absurd. He wanted Florrie to live just as she had been accustomed to living.

When they reached the roadhouse they telephoned into town and told Mrs. Weissman the good news. She was delighted. Such a weight off her mind. Florrie was a difficult girl to manage and she needed a husband. Besides she was getting older, and the new crop of young girls was starting to get engaged. Well, she would tell her friend Mrs. Baumann, who always asked those pointed questions about Florrie.

Mr. Weissman was pleased, too. He liked old man Aarons, and he thought the boy would be able to manage Florrie. Later when Florrie consulted him about finding a job for Dewy he said he thought he might be able to do something, and soon placed him under his own supervision in the selling end of the Columbine Blouse Company.

"We'll just pay him a little, at first,"

he explained, "cause he won't be worth much right away. But if he shows an interest in the business, and makes good, he'll get promoted as fast, and maybe a little faster, who knows, than any of the other boys. It's all going to be in the family."

They decided not to send out any cards, and not even to put it in the *Times* for a while. They would just tell a few of their intimate friends, and make a formal announcement at Isabelle's wedding, which would take place in a few months. Isabelle, too, was very happy at the engagement.

Everybody was happy. Everybody, that is, but Marty McCabe. It had been hard enough for Marty to drive the Weissman car all over Long Island and see that little shavetail—how he hated shavetails—making love to Miss Florrie. But he didn't think she cared for him. There was something about the way she spoke to Marty that had made his heart beat faster. He was sure crazy about her, he admitted rather sheepishly to himself. Of course, he could never let her know it now, but if that little shrimp didn't treat her right, he'd have Marty McCabe to account to.

Florrie was radiantly happy, basking at the same time in the double suns of Dewy's devotion and her mother's approval. It was the first time she had not quarreled with her mother over the object of her affection. And although the engagement had not been formally announced, everybody had heard about it, and people were calling up all the time to ask for details.

"Well," said Florrie warmly, as Leona Lowenthal gushed into the telephone, "we're not going to announce it until Isabelle's wedding. She's had so much responsibility all her life, running the house for her father and everything, that I thought it would be nice to let her have her engagement all to herself, and not cut in on anything. We haven't decided definitely, but I think we'll be married some time next winter. Don't tell anybody, though. Why don't you come over and look at my things? I'm

beginning to order the stuff now, there's so much I want."

Florrie and Isabelle were together everyday, shopping for the latter's trousseau and picking up things that Florrie might want. The wedding was scheduled early the following month, when Florrie would receive her engagement ring and be publicly promised to DeWitt Aarons.

But the wedding came off, according to schedule, and although the entire Weissman family was there, Florrie did not receive her engagement ring, and she was not publicly promised to DeWitt Aarons. The truth of the matter was that Mr. Weissman refused to make the engagement public.

"Florrie," he said, obdurate to all her threats and pleas, "Dewy is a nice boy and I know you're very fond of him, but there's no use announcing your engagement when he hasn't got a chance of marrying you for a long time. He isn't doing so very well down in the place, and I can't push him ahead of the other fellows unless he does a little something to deserve it. To tell you the truth, if it weren't for you, I don't think I'd keep him, so you can just go on with your understanding, and when the right time comes I'll let you know."

Florrie didn't put up as much of a fight as she once would have, because in a way she had to admit that her father was right. Dewy didn't seem to care very much about working at anything; had an idea that the world owed him a living. But she loved him very much, and although his attitude worried her a little, she knew it would be all right, and she must have patience.

One evening just after dinner, as Florrie was dressing for the theatre, the telephone rang. It was Dewy.

"I'm awfully sorry, dear," he said, "but I won't be able to go tonight. There's a man in town I knew at the front, and he wants me to spend the evening with him. I'll see you tomorrow."

Florrie, hurt, had nothing to do but agree. It was funny, she thought, how

being in love had robbed her of her old temper. Two years ago if anybody had done a thing like that to her there would have been a terrific scene, and probably a broken engagement. She thought of her dismissal of Larry and violence with Dick, and smiled. How she had changed. The taming of the shrew, indeed, only it was just loving Dewy that had done it, not Dewy himself.

She went to the theatre with her mother, and Marty McCabe, overhearing Mrs. Weissman's excited denouncement of Dewy, gritted his teeth and swore picturesquely to himself.

"If he starts in treating you that way while you're engaged," shrilled Mrs. Weissman, "how will he act after you're married?"

"But, mother," said Florrie tearfully, "he hasn't seen this man since he was in France, and the man has to leave tomorrow. It was his only chance."

Mrs. Weissman was stubborn.

"It's a bad business," she insisted. "I don't like it."

It was the first of a number of similar occurrences. They began by Dewy coming late to engagements and offering no excuses. A semi-occasional broken appointment, a somewhat abstracted attitude made of Dewy an uncertainty. Florrie's radiance was gone, but her devotion remained. She was a fool, her mother told her and she agreed, but she just didn't seem able to do anything about it. She was licked. She was in love.

Marty McCabe, acutely aware of everything Florrie did, noted with satisfaction the decreasing visibility of the little shrimp. Maybe she wouldn't marry him after all. Maybe she really did care for Marty. The darling. Time would tell.

CHAPTER IX

SEVERAL months passed this way. Florrie never knew when Dewy would call up and break an engagement. She was completely miserable. Her mother pestered her more than ever, her father

had lost his jocosity, and was rather stern on the subject of Dewy. They wanted her to give him up. He was proving worthless, her father said. Rotten in the business. The war had spoiled him. He would have to go if he didn't pick up and take an interest soon.

Florrie couldn't understand herself. She knew she ought to break with Dewy, he couldn't care much about her if he acted that way. Something occurred to her suddenly that had occurred to other people, some time ago. Dewy didn't love her, he only cared about her money. Well, she loved him. She had to have him. She'd make him love her, by her patience and devotion. She ought to kick herself, she thought, for being such a fool, but what could she do. He never said he didn't care about her, and perhaps it was just his careless disposition that made him act that way. She shouldn't have let him see how crazy she was about him; he felt too sure. That was the trouble though, he *was* sure. And when she tried to question him about his indifference, something congealed in her. She couldn't do it. She was afraid of getting into a quarrel. It was hell to be in love.

One evening when her father came home for dinner he called Florrie into his room. He looked grave.

"I had a long talk with Dewey today," he said. "We agreed that he wasn't suited to our business. He's finished on Monday."

"What will he do then?" asked Florrie, anxiously.

"I don't know," replied her father, "and I don't care much. You can ask him when he comes. He said he'd be up tonight. I wish you'd get him out of your mind. Suppose you take a little trip. How'd you like to go to Canada for a while? I'll let you go, and take anyone you want along for company. No? Well, it's your funeral, but remember, there's a limit to my patience."

"Mine too," she said, "but it hasn't come yet. I won't give him up, so there's no use trying."

Dewy came that evening in a sullen mood. There was no use, he told her, he simply wasn't temperamentally fitted for her father's business. One of his friends had written him about an advertising job in Cleveland. He'd always wanted to try his hand at writing, so he'd arranged to go right on out there. Maybe he'd make a lot of money that way, and she could join him. But he didn't want her to feel bound to him. She could consider herself released if she wanted to.

But she didn't want to. She would wait for him until he made enough to marry her. It would be fun living in Cleveland, and she would be glad to get away from New York, where everybody she met knew all about her. She fought a desperate fear that he was trying to let her down easy. But of course she didn't say anything to him about that.

"Will you write to me every day," she asked.

He'd try to, Dewy said, but of course he'd be very busy at first. Anyway it would be several times a week.

At first it was. Dewy wrote regularly, enthusiastically, optimistically, affectionately, with reference to their future in Cleveland. For the first time since early in their engagement, Florrie was happy. She began to make plans again, and busied herself with little domestic tasks, learning to cook and make beds and sweep.

"We won't have much at first," she said, "but I won't mind."

Anything to be with Dewy. He was a wonderful person, no matter what other people said about him. When he smiled at her and his blue eyes looked down fondly, the whole world belonged to her. When he kissed her she soared into ecstasy. She tried to explain it, but she couldn't. You never could, those things were inexplicable, they just happened.

After a little while the letters began coming only once a week. She thought maybe he was ill, and called Isabelle, recently returned from her honeymoon, to ask. Isabelle was not quite so cor-

dial as she had been. No, Dewy was all right, but busy. Surely Florrie realized how it was getting established in a new job and a new town. She mustn't worry.

She knew that, she said to herself, and wouldn't worry. Yet she couldn't help being hurt when her birthday passed with no word from Dewy. Even when he wrote the following week, he didn't mention it. He had simply forgotten. He would come home over Memorial Day, he wrote briefly, and would wire her when to meet him at the train.

The entire week before May 30th found Florrie in a flutter of anticipation. She bought a new dress and spent much time and labor making herself look nice. She stayed in the house the day before waiting for the telegram. It didn't come, but she stifled the fear in her heart by telling herself that it would arrive in the morning. The telegraph service was awful.

She waited all morning. Her mother and father had taken the car and gone to Long Beach for the day, but Florrie had refused to go with them, preferring to keep her vigil. Nothing happened during the morning. The bell rang a few times, and she rushed to answer the door, a sick thrill succeeding the flash of hope as each time it proved to be something else. It occurred to her that the wire had been sent and not delivered. She would call Isabelle, even at a sacrifice to her pride—did she have any more, she wondered—and find out what she knew.

It took ages for the 'phone to be answered. She thought at first they must be out, but finally a masculine voice called a bored hello. A hot wave of surprise, shame, anger, gushed over Florrie as she recognized the voice. It was Dewy's.

"Dewy," she gasped. "Why didn't you wire? I've been waiting since yesterday. What happened? I thought you were sick, and called up Isabelle to find out."

Dewy replying, didn't appear at all disturbed.

"I didn't get a chance to wire," he said. "I wasn't sure what train I'd come on, and caught one at the last minute. I was just going to call you up."

As he spoke Florrie seemed to see things clearly. He could have wired from the train. He should have phoned as soon as he reached the city. Obviously he'd no intention of letting her know he was there. Her parents were right. He didn't care about her, but only about her father's money, and when he decided he couldn't get any he had gone away. Well, she still had a little pride left. She loved him, but she wasn't going to hold him against his will. But he could never say he'd jilted her.

"Dewy," she said, "when you went away you offered me my release. I didn't accept your offer then, but I do now. Our engagement is over. I don't care to wait for you any longer."

"You shouldn't take it that way, Florrie," he said. "But you know how you feel. I guess you really don't care for me. I'm sorry."

But he didn't sound a bit sorry, as he said good-bye and hung up. That was ended. She'd never see him again. And he was glad. She was glad, too, she told herself. Thank God the torment of the past few months was over. And thank God she had broken the engagement herself.

She couldn't cry. The weight on her eyes was too heavy to let the tears out. Her head ached. She walked slowly to her room, and without getting undressed, she crawled into bed and pulled the covers up over her face, abandoning herself to her misery.

But she mustn't be that way when the folks came home. She must be dressed and fixed up and proud. She wouldn't discuss it with them, but simply tell them she had decided to break the engagement.

"That's a good girl," said her father. "I'm glad you came to your senses. He was nothing for you. Just a good-for-nothing young grafter. Now that it's over I'll tell you. The reason he left the

factory was because I made it plain that he wouldn't get any money when he married you. Now I'll give you anything you want. Would you like to have one of those new pearl bracelets? Or a trip somewhere? Anything you want, because you are a brave, sensible girl."

But Florrie wanted nothing except to be let alone. Somehow this thing had brought her closer to her mother, and she accompanied Mrs. Weissman on many of her philanthropic missions. She didn't care to go out where she'd meet any of her old friends. She had a feeling that they were laughing at her, that they knew all the details of the Dewy affair. She was sure Isabelle had broadcasted them mercilessly.

She had a tired, dull feeling, but not dull enough to blunt sharp stabs of pain whenever she thought of Dewy. She wondered what he was doing, whether he would make good in the advertising business. Probably he'd find some rich society girl in Cleveland, whose father wouldn't mind buying her a husband. Life was bitter and tasteless. She was annoyed with everything and everybody. Most of all she was annoyed with Marty McCabe, who was so persistently cheerful and grinning. Maybe he'd have his heart broken some day, and that would stop his idiotic grin. She would have been amazed if she had known that her unhappiness was causing that grin. Not that Marty wanted her to be unhappy. He didn't even know. He thought she had come to her senses and realized the inferiority of the little shrimp. Maybe God would be good to him yet.

CHAPTER X

FOR six months Florrie didn't go out of the house except with her mother and father. She accompanied them to the theatre, to concerts and dinners. She flinched under the knowing looks of her one-time friends. How happy they were at her defeat. How they gloated. If she only knew of some way to fool them! But she hardly cared any more.

She was growing intensely charitable, and spent a good part of every day on the East side, investigating cases for the Federated Charities. She became a Big Sister to a number of little East side girls, and slowly got back a semblance of poise. She didn't care much about her appearance, although from force of habit she kept on applying heavy make-up, which failed in its attempt to hide the hunted look. She was very gentle and sweet. . . . The famous temper was entirely gone, and the sarcasm for which she had been noted had completely disappeared. Those things seemed too much of an effort. She was rapidly reaching the point, which, had she been a Roman Catholic, would have led her to the nunnery.

It seemed to Marty McCabe that his time had come. She was much sweeter to him than she'd ever been. She wouldn't let him know of course, but he had the feeling that she might listen to him now, the angel. He couldn't talk to her, he hadn't the nerve, but he would write her a letter. She found his awkward scrawl slipped into a book when she stepped into the car on the way home from Houston Street:

"Miss Florrie, Dear," it read. "I don't know how to begin, but I just have to. You know I've been crazy over you ever since you first drove me to the hospital that day, and you seemed to kind of like me. I know we aren't in the same position, but the war has changed all that. I have a little money saved up, and a chance to go into a good paying garage. Please don't think I'm too fresh, but I'd be the happiest man in the world if you'd marry me. I'll ask you when you get out of the car.

Marty."

Florrie read the note twice, uncomprehendingly. He wanted to marry her. The impertinence. What had she ever done to deserve that! Oh, God, life was a mess. That lout, that common Irish chauffeur, married to him. Why she had never even known he was alive.

Just like him to misunderstand her kindness. He probably thought she was crazy about him.

With a flare of her old temper she looked up, making a forward gesture as if to bang on the window and stop him. She'd tell him where to get off. As she looked up she was arrested in her motion by a sudden sight of herself in the mirror of the car. She bent forward nervously. The mirror must be out of alignment. She couldn't be that fat.

She opened her handbag and looked at the mirror in it. It was true. She was fat, the flesh was sagging deeply under her chin. There were deep lines from nose to mouth. The make-up was heavy, but actually it didn't conceal anything. She was twenty-four. Nearly twenty-five. Everybody she had known five or six years ago, when she was the most popular girl in her entire circle, was married. Even the predestined old maids.

She paused at the words. Old maids. Would she be one of them? She couldn't be. Live the rest of her life like this, aimlessly, wandering from one uninteresting charity to another, accompanied by none but her mother? No, anything would be better than that. She couldn't see Marty, she didn't hate him, but he just didn't exist. Still, it would be easy enough to get a divorce after a while. And so many society girls were marrying their chauffeurs and grooms and other servants, it was really quite chic. And he certainly was handsome.

She played with the idea a while. If she did that, maybe she'd have so much excitement that the constant thought of Dewy would leave her. It was maddening. No matter how often she made up her mind to forget him, he just stayed right with her.

If she married Marty it would create a lot of excitement. They would have to elope, of course. It would get into the papers. Everybody would be talking about her, jokingly, of course, but secretly admiring her for her daring. Risking everything for the man she loved. That would sound very romantic.

Then they would realize why she had broken with Dewy. And Dewy would, too. She had actually dismissed him, told him she didn't want to wait. He'd think that was the reason. She remembered wishing she could fool them all. This would be a way.

When they reached the house Marty opened the door of the car. He looked at her shamefacedly.

"Will you do it?" he asked, breathlessly.

"Yes," quietly smiling. "*Be careful, we're on the street,*" as he made a lunge for her. "When?"

"We could get away in the morning," he said. "Your mother isn't using the car tomorrow. Why don't you drive downtown with your father, then we can go over to Jersey City, get tied up, and go right on down to Atlantic City. It'll be simple. Darling."

* * *

It was simple. Now, as Florrie sat reading her clippings, she laughed at how simple it had been. Getting married was the simplest part of the whole job. It was getting out of it that would be hard. But in the meantime, she had put it over. Everybody had been fooled. They kept calling and writing all day long. She'd been interviewed by so many reporters she couldn't think straight. She had always given the same statement, "Nothing matters but love." And they had fallen for it. Fools!

She found the letter Dewy had written from Cleveland. It sounded regretful. She had always been too deep for him, he wrote. Probably was planning this whole thing while they were engaged. But he would try to be brave and not reproach her. He hoped she would be very happy.

She read it over several times, wondering whether he really meant it, or was just mocking her. She couldn't bear having him know the truth. Now that the excitement was wearing off, she was thinking of him again. All day long, fixing up the little place, getting the

dinner, she thought of him. She would go mad. And the worst part of it was that Marty loved her so. She felt sorry for him, poor fool.

For the fiftieth time that day the telephone rang. It was Leona Lowenthal. "You wonderful thing, you," she

cooed. "I knew you'd do something like that. I knew you'd put it over on everybody. How did you ever have the courage to do it? Weren't you awfully afraid?"

"Why should I be afraid?" asked Florrie. "Nothing matters but love."

[The End]



Renewal

By Bernice Lesbia Kenyon

HOPE is renewed in foolish hearts like mine . . .
 The leaves of black ailanthus trees, close-pent
 In some dim alley of a tenement
 Renew themselves, because the sun will shine
 One hour upon them out of all the day.
 I, for the sake of you, will take more care
 What song I sing, perhaps, what gown I wear—
 (You long departed, and so far away!)

Hope—What is hope? The search that cannot end—
 The crack in prison walls that will not yield—
 The garnered green of some remembered field—
 In famine days the one last coin to spend—
 The wind that makes a deep disquietude . . .
 Why in my sullen heart is hope renewed?



AN ordinary man kisses a woman in a way that shows he likes the kiss.
 A diplomat, in a way that shows he likes the woman.



Souvenirs of a Southern Trip

By Hartley H. Hepler

THE wild flowers on the Texas prairies, massed in great patterns of raw, vivid colors, reminiscent of a Zuloaga painting.

The pretty girl who descended from the Pullman to the barge while crossing the Mississippi, the attractive stockings she wore, and the way they were rolled.

The multiplicity of goats along the railroad tracks entering New Orleans, and the extraordinary speed with which they agitated their tails.

The friendly mouse that frisked about the aisle of the Seaboard Air Line coach leaving Montgomery, Alabama.

The Moor in the Savannah barber shop, with the initials G. DeV. T. embroidered on his silk shirt.

The other Moor who shined my shoes, and whose horn-rimmed glasses made him look like an approaching Ford.

The magnificent, the superb, the ineffable crab stew at a road-house at Thunderbolt, Georgia.

The fried shrimp at another road-house, and the amiable turtle there, who permitted me, while under the inspiration of a quart of Spey Royal Scotch, to stroke his head.

The arching, moss-hung canopy of the ancient oaks at The Hermitage, and the old plantation mansion, with marble stairs and stone walls still sturdy, but with floors decaying and crumbling away under their two hundred years, the whole redolent of old dreams and other days.

The "Waving Girl" in the house out

on the Savannah River, who for forty years has greeted each passing ship in fulfilment of a promise to her lover who has never returned.

Five little razor-back pigs out on a Georgia forest road, marching like soldiers in single file, and with noses like ant-eaters.

The man in Savannah who had accumulated sixty gallons of angle worms in anticipation of the fishing season.

The young alligators in the clear water of the ditches along the Florida East Coast railroad.

The turtle steaks at Key West.

The opal tints of the water over the Florida keys.

The Bronx and Daquiri cocktails at the Hotel Sevilla in Havana, and the eight-dollar dinner that I ordered afterward and could not eat.

The couple in the dining-room, who after three cocktails and a couple of bottles of La Tropical Gran Fabrica De Cerveza, undertook to fox-trot to the strains of Chopin's nocturne in E flat, Op. 9, No. 2.

The green, blue, orange, purple, red, magenta, cerise, lilac, ecru, vermillion, crimson, lavender, yellow, tan, and mauve seat covers on the Havana Fords.

The pretty young lady with the Chihuahua dog, who in the Key West restaurant argued valiantly for white chicken meat for the pup, and the democratic young waiter who insisted, and demonstrated, that the hound would eat ham, no chicken being available.

The Majesty of the Law

By Ford Douglas

I

FOR the better part of the morning Judge Hawper sat far back in his swivel chair with his eyes on the blackened ceiling of the court-room. Occasionally he emitted a grunt as counsel scored or failed to score a point, and once he groaned aloud. Learned counsel drones on endlessly and the Judge's eyes close. It is a favorite device with him, a trap for the unwary, for presently a false note falls on the judicial ears, the swivel chair rocks forward with a loud bang, the eyes open with a blaze and the wrath of the court falls on the unhappy lawyer in sudden fury. The culprit cringes, shrivels, and begins to take on a sort of a dehydrated appearance, and then, just as he is about to swoon, the chair rocks back again and Judge Hawper resumes his contemplation of the ceiling.

It was one of the court's bad days. For, as is well known, Judge Hawper had what might be termed a dual personality. There were days when one might approach him without fear or trembling and there were other times when to speak to him was to tempt death itself.

The explanation of this is largely pathological, which is to say that his moods depended entirely on the state of his liver. This almost incredible fact is vouched for by the bailiff, old Tom Bowditch, who has made a study for a period of over twenty years of Judge Hawper's eccentricities and having at last hit upon the liver theory he in time came to know the Hawperian bile organ as a trap drummer knows his drums.

And Bowditch found it profitable, for no lawyer would think of announcing ready-for-trial without first getting a reading from old Tom.

Now, Bowditch made no claim that he had discovered a new science; in fact he was a rather silent old fellow and had little to say. Of course hepatoscopy is not new; the Etruscan priests were adept liver-readers and the ecclesiastics of ancient Babylon and Assyria practised the rite to the entire satisfaction, doubtlessly, of their flocks. Still it was Bowditch who rediscovered the art after a lapse of some four or five thousand years and put it into active operation in Judge Hawper's court and he is entitled to the credit.

It is Saturday, known in federal practice as "Rules' Day," and the court-room is crowded. This is a time set apart as a sort of field day in which all constructive labor hitherto accomplished is knocked galley west and pending cases are set flying in as many unexpected directions as pins in a bowling alley. Verdicts, judgments and decisions arrived at after tedious weeks of trial are annihilated in a twinkling, bombs of a legal nature are hurled from every direction, and a lawyer every now and then has to be led out of the room. The result of all this tension is that Judge Hawper assesses fines right and left and the wretched practitioners make solemn, though secret, oath never to appear again in his court.

As the morning drags along, Hawper's irritability increases. He fidgets in his chair, leaning at times far forward with only the top of his head bobbing queerly above the desk. This strange behavior

had long been the cause of comment and there were a number of theories and explanations for it. One was that the Judge assisted his decisions by a pack of cards which he kept under the desk for that purpose, and another, advanced by some of the younger lawyers, was that secreted behind a false panel was a number of rabbits which he in moments of extreme irritation was given to fondling. There was no truth, however, in either of these stories. The plain and unromantic explanation of this queer business is that Judge Hawper was afflicted with itching feet.

The noon whistles blew, finally, and hardly had the first blast sounded before Hawper sprang from his seat and hurried from the rostrum and into his chambers, leaving an astonished counselor, who at the moment had been arguing a motion for a new trial, suspended in midair. There was a clatter of gavels, a hoarse shouting by bailiffs, and court was adjourned for the day and the week.

Slamming the door, Hawper turned the key in the lock, and then after having cut himself off from all connection with the outside world he pulled out a bottom drawer in his desk, from which he took a square-shouldered bottle of gin. Without any undue loss of time he elevated this and allowed the contents to gurgle down a sorely parched throat, setting down the bottle at last with a grimace that oddly expressed both relief and vexation. For the gin was of the synthetic variety, a vile imitation of alcohol and turpentine, and, while it was better than nothing, it was not the quality of goods to which he was accustomed. It left an unpleasant taste in his mouth, and as he spat in a vain endeavor to rid himself of it, he recalled with grim satisfaction the fact that he had given the bootlegger from whom it had been taken two years in the Federal penitentiary.

Now, ordinarily Judge Hawper had access to a bountiful supply of first-class stuff. A thousand or more of violations of the Volstead act kept the big steel

vault full of "evidence," but some thieving hand had evidently been tampering with the lock, for when he had turned the knob to the mystic numbers that morning the door failed to respond. A gill remained in the bottle and, after swallowing this, Hawper opened a door and stealthily slipping into the district attorney's office deposited the empty bottle in the waste basket under the prosecutor's desk, and then, feeling much better, put on his hat and left the building.

The grind was over for the week; nothing to do now till Monday. He stood on the sidewalk and for a moment rejoiced at his freedom. The same thought came to him every Saturday noon when he left the court-room; still nothing ever happened. He knew that he would lunch at the club, that he would play bridge all afternoon, and that afterward he would go home to his bachelor quarters, where he would dine, read the evening paper and go to bed. What a prospect! But what else was there to do? He was sixty-two, and at that age adventures do not come easily. And then, again, he was a Federal Judge with a certain amount of dignity to uphold. Truly, life was not all beer and skittles.

A chattering group of young girls in flopping galoshes arrested his attention for a moment, and somehow this brought to his mind a bitter thought of his youth. Life had cheated him. His boyhood had been spent on a farm, and later he had put in his days and nights in a village law office when most young fellows of his age were gallivanting about in side-bar buggies with their best girls. He took no account of the fact that those same young fellows had married their buggy-riding girls, who were now fat old women, and that they had become as many bothersome old men running harness shops, feed stores and groceries back in the little one-horse town. This frame of mind was one that he fell into occasionally, and in these moments of self-pity he resolved to cut loose and raise the devil at the very first opportunity.

He crossed the street and set out for the club. It was slightly out of his way, but on the far corner was Stein's Department Store, and beyond this was a big hotel with a marble corridor a block long. Both were pleasing. Stein's always had an attractive display of women's garments known to the trade as "undies," and the hotel—he had discovered it one day when a sudden shower forced him to make use of the sheltered corridor—usually offered something even more alluring.

He was not disappointed. The department store windows had things in them that he had never seen before. They were of the thinnest of material and about as opaque as a good grade of plate glass.

Hawper slowed his steps and, tarrying before certain garments displayed on wax figures, believed himself conscious of a slight aphroditous glow. One figure, however, displeased him, for when he noticed that a limb had somehow become detached and lay on the floor, his mind reverted back to the days when he had had a rather scandalous love affair with a one-legged Ohio schoolmarm. Somewhat annoyed at this, he passed on, pausing, however, in front of the window of an adjoining hardware store. Here was placed a large assortment of hand-saws and hatchets, and these Hawper pretended to examine, though in reality his eyes were slanting across to the last of Stein's windows containing some very life-like figures in gauzy silk nighties.

"Step right in, sir, and let me show you our line."

Hawper turned and surveyed a young man who, noticing the portly figure in front of the hardware store window, had come out onto the sidewalk in the hope of making a sale.

"Which will it be," inquired the salesman briskly, "a saw or a hatchet?"

The Judge gave him the slow, deliberate look with which he froze lawyers in his court, and said nothing.

It was a challenge and the salesman embraced it eagerly. He was of the

chosen race, and he delighted in difficult conquests.

"Step right inside," he said, smiling warmly and at the same time laying a hand on Hawper's elbow, "and I'll show you the best saw for the money that—"

Hawper twisted aside, his anger rising.

"No," he barked; "I don't want any saw."

"How about a hatchet?"

"To hell with your hatchets—"

"Something then in garden hose?" queried the salesman, making a final effort.

"I don't want anything!" roared Hawper.

"Well, then," returned the salesman, retreating discreetly to the shelter of his threshold, "what have you been a standin' there gapin' into our window for? Move on and don't blockade the sidewalk!"

And with this he slammed the door, leaving Hawper staring after him, very red of face.

"Some day," muttered the Judge, "you may be up before me for lugging a pint. And then I'll do *all* the talking."

Visioning his actions should this happy event come true, he turned and walked slowly down the street.

II

For two years now—in fact since the day of its discovery, the hotel lobby and the long marble corridor, "Peacock Alley," had been on his daily line of march to the club. He never entered it without a sense of a venture, which, though somewhat vague, was pleasing; and it was his custom to stop for a moment at the entrance to give the lenses of his horn-rimmed spectacles a brisk rubbing on his handkerchief. While engaged in this, his face always became wreathed in a reflective smile, an expression that would have astonished most of the members of the bar, for then it was that his mind dwelled back on the incident that first intrigued him. It happened on the day of the shower.

A creature of habit, as most men of his age are, Judge Hawper turned into the vestibule of the hotel almost before he knew it. His set-to with the hatchet salesman still rankled, but now, as he gazed at the familiar tile and bronze, his wrath faded, and removing his glasses he reached for his handkerchief. A pleasant mission was in store for him, and the usual reflective and anticipatory smile appeared on his countenance.

On the day of the shower, he recalled, he had entered the hotel as a matter of protection. The sheltered corridor brought him a block closer to his club, and so, ignorant of the fact that he was trodding the sacred tiles of Peacock Alley, he had reached about midway of his journey when the thing happened. At that particular moment, he remembered, he had been turning over in his mind a certain decision in the 49th Ohio, and then in a twinkling his thoughts were scattered to the four winds and he paused breathlessly to stare. He nearly stumbled over them. For their owner, seated on a divan, and apparently deeply engaged in the perusal of a letter, had thrust them carelessly out in his path. They were well-rounded and covered by only a gossamer of silk, a sight pleasing enough; but the thing that interested him most was a slender strap immediately below the knee of one of them and on which was a small buckle of burnished gold.

All thought of legal matters vanished and he wondered if the strap held on the concealed side a watch—he had read of such things in the Sunday papers—and he began to manoeuvre awkwardly about in an endeavor to satisfy his curiosity. The mystery was never solved. For the girl, glancing up, snatched at her skirts, and Hawper was obliged to pass on, though with many a backward glance. This episode led to other discoveries, and in time the place came to be a sort of "Follies" to him, a free show.

Saturday is the busy day of the week in the hotel business and, passing through the revolving door, Hawper found the lobby crowded. He elbowed

his way through a throng of blue-jowled bagmen boasting of unprecedented sales in Akron, South Bend and other trade centers; he shoved by a queue of fretful persons at the desk; he passed without noticing the triangular affairs then in progress at the newsstand and the telegraph desk.

Emerging at last into the marble corridor, he breathed a sigh of satisfaction as he surveyed the long vista of Peacock Alley. It was cool, quiet and with a high-vaulted ceiling of stone like that of a cloister. The ecclesiastical atmosphere, however, vanished with a closer inspection. For on either side were rows of wicker divans, seating what might have been easily mistaken for the chorus of a musical comedy. They were good-looking young women, heavily accoutered with vanity bags, boxes, cases and other feminine trappings, and they all had an expectant air of waiting for someone who was to appear at the very next instant.

Giving his spectacles another brief rubbing, Judge Hawper pulled down his vest, straightened the lapels of his coat and prepared for his usual leisurely inspection. It was his destiny, however, to advance but a few paces before he was to suffer an interruption.

"Why, hello, Judge!"

Hawper turned and saw a smiling and dapper young man who was extending a hand in greeting. He took the hand slowly and with obvious annoyance.

"How d' do," he grunted, dropping, almost flinging, the hand from him.

Vaguely he resented the intrusion of any other male person in this trysting place, and then the young man was a little too sleek and well-groomed. It was the sleek young bucks who rode the town girls around in side-bar buggies while he studied the dusty tomes of the law, and he never forgot it.

Moreover, the fellow was a stranger—at least he did not remember ever having seen him—though he might be one of the younger lawyers who occasionally appeared in his court. But whoever and whatever he was, Hawper

decided that he would hold no parley with him, and he turned to go.

"Just a minute, Judge. I'd like to ask you a question."

"Well, what is it?" demanded Hawper. "Out with it!"

Before the young man could reply a soft, pleading voice came from somewhere behind Hawper's shoulder. "Oh, Harry, do be careful!" And at this Hawper wheeled and looked into a pair of the bluest eyes that he had ever seen.

She was a wisp of a girl, almost fragile-looking. It was perhaps her slender figure that accentuated her carriage, a certain aristocratic ease of manner that cannot be simulated. She was fair, with hair of a natural golden tint that surmounted exquisitely chiseled features; but it was the eyes that gave Hawper his thrill. They were of a turquoise blue, large and, set widely apart, gave her the look of extreme unsophistication.

Hawper drank in her beauty with a glance, and for a moment he stood staring and quite forgetful of the presence of the other man.

"Harry, do be careful," she repeated.

Harry laughed. "Why, June, this is my old friend, Judge Hawper. He can advise us, if anyone can."

He turned to Hawper.

"Judge, I want you to know my cousin, Miss Henderson. She's from Louisville, Judge, and I guess you know what they say about the Kentucky girls."

This hint falling on fertile ground, Hawper was prompt to laud the famed beauties of the blue-grass country, a speech that made Miss Henderson blush very prettily.

"Now, what I wanted to ask you was this," said Harry, looking carefully around and lowering his voice. "It's like this—well, the fact is—er a—"

"Harry, please!"

"To come right out with it, Miss Henderson is stopping here at the hotel and she wants a drink—"

"Harry!"

Hawper was beginning to see a light, and now the conviction came to him that

the pair were attempting to work him for some liquor.

"I haven't any," he said shortly, "and I don't know anyone who has."

"Oh, it isn't that," said Harry. "June has a quart bottle in her trunk. But is it a safe thing to do—here in the hotel?"

"Absolutely!" returned Hawper. "She is a *bona fide* guest and her room is her home!"

Miss Henderson now offered a word of explanation.

It appeared that she only drank the stuff under doctor's orders, and to properly disguise the taste, which she loathed, sugar and lemon juice would have to be added, all of which would require the services of a waiter or a bellboy, who might turn informer and the result would be arrest and prosecution, a thing which she of course would not dare chance. All of this was set out in many words and with sundry blushes and catches of the breath.

"There's not the slightest danger," avowed Hawper.

Miss Henderson hesitated. "If it really—"

"Say," interrupted Hawper, seized by a sudden idea, "if you want me to, I'll go right up there with you, and I'd like to see anyone interfere when I'm around."

"Oh, Judge, if you only will!"

"Fine! Fine!" ejaculated Harry. "It makes the whole thing as safe as going to prayer meeting."

A moment later they took the elevator and in less than five minutes after that they were all seated in Miss June Henderson's suite somewhere on the twelfth floor.

III

ABOUT four o'clock Judge Hawper squeezed the last few remaining drops out of the quart bottle and remarked at the uncomfortable warmth and stuffiness of the room. Up to that time he had made no objection to atmospheric conditions; indeed, one would believe that he had passed the afternoon very enjoyably. During this time rapid progress had been made in the intimacy of his

friendship with Miss Henderson and her cousin Harry. The young people adopted him into their family as "Uncle Eli," and, not to be outdone, Hawper laid aside all formality and now called them by their first names, sometimes addressing Miss Henderson as "my dear little niece."

"Let's get some fresh air," suggested Hawper. "Let's get a car and take a ride."

Harry, pleading a business engagement, had left early in the afternoon, but as the girl (and the bottle) remained, Hawper had not found the young man's absence unendurable. Luncheon had been forgotten, a fact that under the circumstances is by no means remarkable, and now, with almost the entire quart in an otherwise empty stomach, the Judge was beginning to feel restive.

"Nothing like a breath of fresh air occasionally," continued Hawper, viewing his empty glass somewhat wistfully, "and, besides, we might find somebody helpful in the way of refreshment. We'll look in at the Country Club."

Miss Henderson shook her head. There were a great many reasons, it seemed, why this could not be done, but Hawper masterfully brushed them all aside, and in the end she capitulated, but with many provisos, however, and to all of which Judge Hawper assented, as a good-natured and admiring uncle should have done. A car was ordered and after certain deft and, to Hawper, absolutely unnecessary attentions to her toilet, they left the room.

In the lobby Hawper caught, he thought, a fleeting glance of Harry. He made no effort to hail him, but, on the contrary, grasped his companion by the arm and hurried her down Peacock Alley. Blasé lounge-lizards smiled as they rested their eyes on Miss Henderson's blonde beauty, whereat the Judge's countenance hardened, as stern and grim as that of a Chief Eunuch escorting a Sultana. For a few moments he was jealous of every man in the room, and this left him only when they stepped into a car at the curb outside the door.

But once they were in motion, Haw-

per's soul expanded. The day was perfect; almost a full quart of Kentucky's best reposed blissfully in the judicial viscera, and at his side was a charming girl of extraordinary beauty.

"This is life," he said to himself. "This is what I have been missing!"

A brief feeling of self-pity swept over him and he fiercely resolved to make up for lost time. Companionship with one of the opposite sex had been a thing he had rarely enjoyed—indeed, now, by some inexplicable vagary of the mind, the solitary romance of his lost youth stood out before him—the affair he had had with the school teacher. That incident and the one he was now enjoying, though separate by no great space of years, were of two vastly different periods and, grasping for some illustration of that fact, there came into his mind the sharply contrasted displays of the clothesline back home and the one in Stein's window.

"Yes," he thought, "they represent the times fairly well—red flannel union suits and silk teddies."

He turned and feasted his eyes on Miss Henderson's profile.

"Are you perfectly comfortable, June?" he inquired solicitously.

"Perfectly," she returned. "The ride is just what I needed. You were wonderful to think of it."

Hawper grinned happily.

"You leave it to your Uncle Eli," he said. "He can think of a lot of things."

And then as if to prove his words he tucked the laprobe around her slender knees, giving the operation the utmost care. But the robe refused to stay tucked—a state of affairs that did not annoy him in the least—and frequently he was obliged to give it his attention, delicious and thrilling moments when, as he leaned over her, he could feel the contact of her arm on his shoulder. Another thing that moved him strangely when engaged in this pleasurable labor was the delicate odor that came to his nostrils. It was intoxicating—a scent as vague and elusive as moonlight, as subtle and intriguing as a whisper from behind the latticed windows of a harem.

More maddening yet, there was only a trace of it, a homeopathic application apparently, and it was this, no doubt, that made Judge Hawper breathe like a drowning horse.

The Country Club was reached too soon, Hawper thought. However, there was nothing to do but get out of the car, which they did, and a moment later he somewhat stiffly escorted his guest into the clubhouse.

Now, Judge Hawper had belonged to the club for a number of years, though beyond paying his annual dues he had but little connection with it. He had tried golf, but finding that the long walks hurt his feet, he broke all his clubs over a sandbox and announced that the game was only for half-wits.

"It's the lowest form of entertainment," he said, "next to shaking a bush."

Another thing that irritated him was the members. Many of them were lawyers, most of them with cases pending in his court, and they were given to forming a hollow square about him, smothering him with adulation. Even at his first attempt at golf, at his very first tee, when he missed the ball twelve times in succession, they were vociferous in his praise, assuring him that he was getting along famously. Then it was that he damned them all and, hurling his club far out onto the green, turned and walked back to the clubhouse. That night no one but Hawper went home to dinner and the bar did the largest business in its history.

"You sit down here, Miss June," he said, gesturing at a chair, "and I'll see if I can't get something started."

Judge Hawper was successful. He got something started. It came with ridiculous ease. Indeed, an ordinary club member would rarely have difficulty in the matter; a member of the bench would fail only under the most adverse circumstances; and for a Federal Judge accompanied by such a vision of loveliness as Miss June Henderson a lack of success would be an utter impossibility.

For instantly Judge Hawper was greeted from all sides. Members not

of the profession and who had hitherto paid no attention to Hawper, after a single glance at his companion, rushed up and shook hands warmly. Friendly hands were laid upon him and he was dragged, not unwillingly, down into the grill, and there a long line of bottles and flasks was placed on what was once a bar. There were curved, form-fitting silver flasks, flat bottles, round bottles, square bottles, and one member pulled from under his sweater a hot-water bag, which he declared contained nothing less than a quart of elderberry wine. It was a reception that almost brought a lump to Judge Hawper's throat.

They all moved over to a table, where an ex-bartender put bottles of sparkling water before them. Then came the Scotch, a smuggled article from Florida, followed then some Irish brought down from Halifax; Mexico contributed a priceless pint of cognac; Cuba's offering was rum, hot and fiery; and after that they drank the hot-water bag of elderberry as a sort of chaser.

This last the Judge pronounced excellent. He inquired as to where the member had got it, thereby throwing him into a momentary panic, for he had stolen it from his grandmother, and also casting a chill over most of the others, who had hoped that no questions would be asked.

When, however, Hawper hinted that the refreshments were very good, so far as they went, there was a revival of spirits and a hot hurrying to lockers to replenish stores. The hours passed delightfully. Musical talent was discovered shortly and, after several solo numbers, they all sang the *Stein Song* to Scotch highballs.

It was about seven o'clock when a bellboy sidled up behind Hawper, who was in the middle of a funny story, and nudged him on the shoulder.

"Your niece says," he began, "that—"

"My niece?" interrogated Hawper, wheeling irritably around. "What niece—what are you talking about?"

"Yes, sir, your niece," returned the boy doggedly, "your niece upstairs—"

"Oh!" Hawper's jaw dropped, for he

had quite forgotten his guest. "Well, what did she say?"

"She says that she's taking dinner with some friends and she wants you to come up and meet them. She says, though, you needn't hurry. She says she's gettin' along fairly well."

Indeed, although deserted by her host, Miss Henderson had not fared badly. Four young men hung about her—they had become acquainted in some mysterious manner—and with these young gentlemen she was now carrying on a most delightful flirtation. She was versatile and charming. It developed that she could both play and sing, and later she told them quaint anecdotes about her "dear old Uncle Eli."

Now, a girl who has a Federal Judge for an uncle needs no credentials, at least a girl with the looks of Miss June Henderson, and, as a matter of fact, these four young men right now would not have given a hoot if her uncle had been a whirling dervish. They pressed her to stay for dinner, there would be music and dancing, and, though she refused at first, she finally relented and accepted after much pleading.

Hawper at last decided to investigate. It required great will-power for him to tear himself away, but he told them he would be "ri' back."

He rose from his chair, vaguely noting the fact that the single light above the table had expanded into a vast chandelier and that when he looked at himself in the mirror behind the bar he saw a regiment of Hawpers.

"It's that elderberry," he muttered. "I never *could* drink elderberry."

He found her in the dining-room. A dinner dance was on and there was the usual Saturday night crowd. He located her by following the stares of some dowagers who were glaring through lorgnettes. Glancing over their shoulders, he discovered his guest at table with four of the most desirable young men of the club.

"Oh, uncle," she cried, "I'm not near ready to go home yet."

"Neither am I," he said, much relieved.

And then, wheeling about, he made his way down the stairs and back to the grill-room.

IV

It was noon when Hawper woke up. He had no distinct recollection of how he got home. His head hurt him and he had an awful taste in his mouth. He remembered vaguely that four young men had helped him into a car, and there was a girl, too, in the party. She was the one he had taken out to the club, but he could not remember her name. He had a hazy recollection that a man rode on the front seat with the driver—a tall, slim man with a tremendous bass viol. It must have been one of the musicians, and from that he deduced that the hour was late and the dance over. For a time he cudgeled his brain in a vain effort to recall the name of his companion, but, failing, he rolled over and lapsed into a fitful slumber.

Some time about six o'clock he got up and slowly started to dress. His head still hurt and his efforts were marked with great indecision, there being moments in which he almost threw up the job and went back to bed again. Then there came a knock on the door and, opening it, Hawper saw a red-cheeked messenger boy, who thrust an envelope in his hand and who, after volunteering the information that no answer was expected, departed, humming the latest jazz number of the picture palaces.

It was a square envelope, addressed with violet ink in that peculiarly slanting style of writing that brands it undeniably as of a feminine origin. Hawper turned on his reading light and, sinking into a chair, slowly tore the envelope along an outer edge.

He was not accustomed to receiving epistles from women, and he proceeded at his labor gingerly and with misgivings. At last he extracted the heavy sheet of notepaper from its cover and, as he did so, there came to his nostrils a faint fragrance that was vaguely familiar.

He spread the communication under the table light and read:

My dear Uncle Eli:

As I am leaving the city this evening, I am writing you this hasty note thanking you for your hospitality. You were a dear, and if you were here right now I would give you a hug. You gave me a wonderful time and I enjoyed the evening at the club more than I can tell you.

Now, Uncle Eli, there is one more thing you can do for me. If you will look on your docket you will see that I am up for a violation of the Volstead Act. A couple of plain-clothes bulls caught Harry and me in a limousine full of Scotch. They got us with the goods with no possible chance of wiggling out of it. But of course, Uncle Eli, it would never do to have your niece convicted, so I am leaving the matter for you to smother.

Your affectionate niece,

June Henderson.

P.S.—I took more orders at the club last night than Harry can deliver in a month. So again I thank you.
J. H.

For a long time Hawper stared at the letter. His first impulse was to telephone the police; but this was only fleeting, for his good common sense told him that the resultant publicity would make him the laughing stock of the town.

"I guess she's got me," he muttered. "And there's nothing else to do but to smother up the whole damn thing!"

V

TODAY Judge Hawper goes down the street on the opposite side from Stein's and he would not walk through Peacock Alley for a king's ransom.



Flea

By Paul Eldridge

I WAS the knight-errant of insects, seeking adventure. I winged my way in eager quest—man, dog, monkey, hen—I bit them all, and everywhere. I learned too late, as I was crushed between the two great thumbs of Death, that all flesh tastes alike.



TWO people who disagree on fundamentals may be happy together; but if one adores chocolates and the other loathes the sight of them, disaster is imminent.



Dusty Windows

By T. F. Mitchell

A PRODIGIOUS amount of money is spent annually in New York for charitable purposes, and yet very little cheer is really produced. A hospital is always a towering monstrosity, like some mediaeval keep, guarded at its gates by ogres who seem loath to let anybody in. An orphan asylum is always a sinister pile of gray stone, with such an abject air of gloom and cheerlessness about it as to freeze the heart of Dr. Crane himself. Institutions for the blind, the crippled, are all of the same

sort. Surrounded by frowning walls they lift up tier upon tier of gloomy cavernous windows. One wonders what goes on inside these bastiles. What ghosts of lost happiness roam the dark stairways? What saddened faces peer out of the windows at a gay and bustling world that has cast them aside? Verily it were better for a man that a millstone were tied about his neck and he were cast in the depths of the sea than that he should be born to doom in one of these living graves.



Unknown

By Alice Corbin

I TRY to bend to you, I try to keep
My mind on you, and you alone,
But passion blinds me to your face—
It is not you that I have known.

Though in your love I lose myself,
Though by your beauty I am torn,
I seek for you, but do not find—
The you in me is yet unborn.

Though you alone of all the world
Can draw me as the night draws dawn,
It is not you—I only know
"It will be you when you are gone."



Répétition Générale

By H. L. Mencken and George Jean Nathan

§ 1

HUMAN EMINENCE—The leading Methodist layman of Pottawattamie county, Iowa. . . . The man who won the limerick contest conducted by the Toombsboro, Ga., *Banner*. . . . The secretary of the Little Rock, Ark., Kiwanis Club. . . . The president of the Johann Sebastian Bach *Bauverein* of Highlandtown, Md. . . . The girl who sold the most Liberty Bonds in Duquesne, Pa. . . . The captain of the champion basket-ball team at the Gary, Ind., Y.M.C.A. . . . The man who owns the best bull in Coosa county, Ala. . . . The tallest man in Covington, Ky. . . . The oldest subscriber to the Raleigh, N. C., *News and Observer*. . . . The most fashionable milliner in Bucyrus, O. . . . The business agent of the Plasterers' Union of Somerville, Mass. . . . The author of the ode read at the unveiling of the monument to General Robert E. Lee at Valdosta, Ga. . . . The original Henry Cabot Lodge man. . . . The owner of the champion Airedale of Buffalo, N. Y. . . . The first child named after the Hon. Warren Gamaliel Harding. . . . The old lady in Wahoo, Neb., who has read the Bible 38 times. . . . The boss who controls the Italian, Czecho-Slovak and Polish votes in Youngstown, O. . . . The professor of chemistry, Greek, rhetoric and piano at the Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, Tex. . . . The boy who sells 225 copies of the *Saturday Evening Post* every week in Tyrone, Pa. . . . The youngest murderer awaiting hanging in Chicago. . . . The leading dramatic critic of Pittsburgh. . . . The

night watchman in Penn Yan, N. Y., who once shook hands with Chester A. Arthur. . . . The Lithuanian woman in Bluefields, W. Va., who has had five sets of triplets. . . . The actor who has played in "Lightnin'" 1,600 times. . . . The best horse-doctor in Oklahoma. . . . The highest-paid church-choir soprano in Knoxville, Tenn. . . . The most eligible bachelor in Cheyenne, Wyo. . . . The engineer of the locomotive that pulled the train that carried the Hon. A. Mitchell Palmer to the San Francisco Convention. . . . The girl who got the most votes in the popularity contest at Egg Harbor, N. J. . . .

§ 2

Once Again, the Old Topic.—While it may be true that a woman admires intelligence in a man, what she wants is less a concrete and prolonged demonstration of that intelligence than a simple preliminary guarantee. She may relish intelligence in the man's conversation for fifteen minutes or so, but thereafter she is willing to take the intelligence for granted and have pleasant nonsense in its stead. This holds true of every woman in the world—white or black—under forty.

§ 3

Effects of Bliss.—In contemplating the stupendous achievements of such a man as Wagner—achievements so colossal that only a small minority of men, specially trained, can even comprehend and appreciate them—one often finds one's self wondering how much further

he would have gone had he not been harassed by his two wives. His first wife, Minna Planer, was frankly and implacably opposed to his life-work, and made deliberate efforts to dissuade him from it. She regarded "Lohengrin" as nonsensical, and "Tannhäuser" as downright indecent. It was her constant hope, until Wagner finally kicked her out, that he would give over such stuff, and consecrate himself to the composition of respectable operas in the manner of Rossini, her favorite composer. The only composition of his that genuinely pleased her was a set of variations for the *cornet à piston* that he wrote in Paris. She was a singer, and had the brains of one.

It must be plain that the presence of such a woman—and Wagner lived with her for twenty years—must have put a fearful burden upon the man's creative genius. No man can be absolutely indifferent to the prejudices and opinions of his wife. She has too many opportunities to shove them down his throat. If she can't make him listen to them by howling and bawling, she can make him listen by snuffing. To say that he can carry on his work without paying any heed to her is equal to saying that he can carry on his work without paying any heed to his toothache, his conscience, or the boiler-factory next door. In spite of Minna, Wagner composed a number of very fine music dramas. But if he had poisoned her at the beginning of his career it is very likely that he would have composed more of them, and perhaps even better ones.

His second wife, the celebrated Cosima Liszt von Bülow, had far more intelligence than Minna, and so we may assume that her presence in his music factory was less of a handicap upon the composer. Nevertheless, the chances are that she, too, did him far more harm than good. To begin with, she was extremely plain in face—and nothing is more damaging to the creative faculty than the constant presence of ugliness. Cosima, in fact, looked not unlike a modern woman politician; even Nietz-

sche, a very romantic young fellow, had to go crazy before he could fall in love with her. In the second place, there is good reason to believe that Cosima, until after Wagner's death, secretly believed that her father, Papa Liszt, was a far better musician. Men's wives almost invariably make some such mistake; to find one who can separate the man of genius from the mere husband, and then estimate the former accurately and fairly—this is very rare. A woman usually respects her father, but her view of her husband is mingled with contempt, for she is, of course, privy to the transparent devices with which she snared him. It is difficult for her, being so acutely aware of the shallowness of the man, to give due weight to the dignity of the artist. Moreover, Cosima had rather shoddy tastes, and they played destructively upon poor Wagner. There are parts of "Parsifal" that suggest her very strongly—more strongly, in fact, than they suggest the author of "Die Götterdämmerung."

I do not here decry Wagner; on the contrary, I praise him, and perhaps excessively. It is staggering to think of the work he did, even with Minna and Cosima shrilling into his ears. What interests me is the question as to how much further he might have gone had he escaped the passionate affection of the two of them. The thought fascinates, and almost alarms. There is a limit beyond which sheer beauty becomes unseemly. In "Tristan und Isolde," in the Ring, and even in parts of "Parsifal," Wagner pushes his music very near that limit. A bit beyond lies the fourth dimension of tone—and madness. Both Beethoven and Brahms, I believe, more than once edged over the line. Two bachelors. Had Beethoven married in 1802, as he seems to have been tempted to do by some scheming wench, it is doubtful that the world would ever have heard the Eroica. In the Eroica there is everything that startles and dismays a loving wife: brilliant novelty, vast complexity, thunderous turmoil, great bursts of undiluted

genius. Even Beethoven never wrote anything more astounding. The C Minor symphony is relatively elemental beside it—even the first movement of the C Minor. Nor is there anything so revolutionary in the Ninth.

The Eroica, indeed, was written precisely at the moment when Beethoven became fully conscious of his extraordinary powers—more accurately, of his singular and unchangeable *superiority*. It is the work, not only of a man who is absolute master of his materials, but also of a man who disdains his materials, and his customers with them. In the first movement he simply spits into the face of the cosmos. Scarcely ten measures have been played before one suddenly realizes that one is in the presence of something entirely new in music—not merely new in degree, but new in kind. It differs as much from anything written before it, even by Beethoven, as a picture by Cézanne differs from a picture by an English Academician. This first movement of the Eroica has never been sufficiently studied and appraised: it is unutterably stupendous. In the funeral march, I believe, Beethoven descends to some rather cheap tricks, and in the last movement he is often obvious. But in the first movement, and to a slightly less degree in the scherzo, he takes leave of earth and disports himself among the gods. It is the composition of a colossus. And a bachelor. No normal woman could have watched its genesis without some effort to make it more seemly, more decorous and connubial, more respectable. A faithful wife, present at its first performance, would have blushed. Women hate revolutions and revolutionists. They like men who are docile, well-esteemed, and never late at meals.

§ 4

In Rebuttal.—Several months ago I published in these pages an article on actors. In it I sought hesitatingly to point out certain fundamental weaknesses in the actor as an individual, with

foot-notes upon his vanity, defective intelligence and comparative illiteracy. Since it is only fair to let the actor speak for himself in rebuttal, I append (verbatim) a letter received shortly after the article in question appeared:

Enroute.
Colonial Theatre
Akron, Ohio.

My Dear Sir:

I trust you will get a look at this before it hits the waste basket, THIS IS NOT A SHORT STORY, but a PERSONAL LETTER. I ask a question, What on earth have you against ACTORS? To criticise the artistic or histrionic ability of a group of actors, or as individuals, that is quite within your jurisdiction (as a critic) but when you delve in personalities I think you Take quite a Mouthfull of Mail Pouch. ;

One could not be so wilful, so caustic, without a reason. Fess up now, what is it all about, reminds me of that old passage in the "Mellers", Dont shake hands with that man Ed he 'aint done right by our Nell. Having as you say, a goodly amount of the worlds goods, position, and well known, and I have an idea, as equally well disliked, you fear nothing, but why rub it in, I refer to yours of the March issue, and cannot help but write the following, and I know you will forgive me. The construction, being only an Actor.

A twin-six Packard drives up to a beautiful home, a man gets out, enters, he asks for his wife, the servant tells him she is up stairs entertaining friends, the children are out, with the governess, he mixes a cocktail, seats himself at a desk, takes from his pocket a paper, reads it, smiles, signs his name and looks out of the window toward his lovely little motor boat ALL THIS IS MINE he says, My Family, This House, My Car, my Boat my Friends, and this, my contract calling for a three year star ring on Broadway at Two Thousand dollars a week, and I, only a poor Brainless, Vain, Actor, I wonder what I would have had now had I been a CRITIC with MUCH LEARNING. . . . He falls back on the lounge, sighs, smiles and again says, I WONDER, And Jean, old Bean, I smile with him. God is good to his Mountebanks, Brainless or otherwise.

Sincerely & with good wishes, I am
(signed) VAL STANTON.

P.S. NO CHARGE for the publication of the little story, if you have space, or nerve enough, to publish same. V. S.

§ 5

Constitution Day.—On September 17, 1787, in lovely Autumn weather, the

delegates gathered in Independence Hall at Philadelphia completed the final draft of the Constitution of the United States. September is a pleasant month for holidays. Let Constitution Day be established on the seventeenth. Let it be observed simply, not by parades, oratory and martial exercises, not by the braying of bands and the discharge of artillery, but by every citizen continuing peacefully at his customary occupations, with a broad band of crêpe wrapped around his left arm in memory of the deceased.

§ 6

Announcement.—One year ago, in this place, a purse of \$100,000 cash was offered to any citizen of the United States who would stand up in meeting and say upon his honor that he believed that any part of the money stolen from the American people during the late war, under cover of the Shipping Board, would ever be returned to the Treasury. No such person having appeared and all of the thieves being now made secure by the Statute of Limitations, the offer is herewith withdrawn.

§ 7

The New England Kultur, II.—From statistics gathered by Sir Arthur Newsholme, late principal medical officer of the Local Government Board, England, and published in his volume, "Prohibition in America," we learn that, in the four years covered by his investigation, a grand total of 185,681 drunks were jailed in the city of Boston. In the same period, the number of arrests for drunkenness in such a theoretical hot-dog town as New Orleans was only 23,904, and in such another as Louisville only 7,220. Boston led the whole American field by many tens of thousands. Even San Francisco, regarded comparatively as an exceptionally dissolute burg, fell a full one hundred and forty-two thousand behind the proud record of the stronghold of New England *kultur*.

§ 8

Fantasia Dolente.—A railroad station at twilight . . . the still, sun-drenched, deserted street of a village at noonday . . . a rainy country road . . . the deck of a steamer on a late, gray afternoon . . . a lonely farmhouse glimpsed fleetingly at night from the window of a train . . . the wet asphalt of the Avenue at midnight, mirroring the hundreds of yellow lights . . . the cold winter moon . . . the photograph of one's self at five. . . .

§ 9

The Literature of a Virtuous Folk.—Prophetic document in the history of American culture, from a book called "My Country, 'Tis of Thee, or, The United States, Past, Present and Future: A Philosophic View of American History and of Our Present Status, etc.," by Willis Fletcher Johnson, A.M., and John Habberton, published in 1892:

American literature will be marked by a hopeful, cheerful, clean, energetic spirit, and as such it will give our people what they cannot easily obtain from the presses of foreign countries. We have faults enough, of which mention has frequently been made in this book, but lack of respectability and of hopefulness are not among them. Our novels are cleaner than those of any other land; our history in the main is decidedly cheering and stimulating in its influence; our poetry, although perhaps not as elegant as that of Europe, has a great deal more of inspiration in it for readers, and our fiction is based upon the life of our own people, which is in the main respectable. Incidents and scenes as bad as any that the world can supply may of course be found in American life by those who choose to look for them, but they are not likely to be written up or read to any extent, except by the vulgar classes. Books about which intelligent and cultivated people on the continent will talk freely in social circles are scarcely tolerated here; some of them are reprinted, but the editions as a rule are very small. Translations of continental novels have generally failed dismally in a commercial sense in the United States. There are a few exceptions, but the rule is so distinct that no one of literary taste, ability and intelligence now wastes his time in translating foreign novels in the hope of securing American publishers. The native writer, as a

rule, is not as skillful as his foreign brother, but he successfully tells our people of what they wish to know. He is in sympathy with their thoughts, tastes, customs and aspirations, so his stories and essays are found in all our weekly papers and magazines, while more skillful productions of foreign pens, which might be had for nothing, are generally excluded. There is no longer any question as to whether we shall have a literature of our own. We have it. It is increasing in volume more rapidly than our people can follow it. It is a good sign. It means that we are a "peculiar people"—not perhaps in the sense in which the expression was used regarding the ancient Hebrews, yet in some respects it means the same. Conceit aside, it really means that we are better than other people. Long may we remain so!

§ 10

Modern Advertising, XII.—Advertisement of the Shur-On Optical Co., Inc., Rochester, N. Y.:

At a formal dinner, theatre party or dance, Shur-on rimless eye-glasses, with white gold mounting, *add the last touch of refinement to a modish appearance.* They would, however, be a *little ultra fine* for an afternoon club meeting. . . .

§ 11

"*Safety First!*"—I have a safe deposit box in the vaults of one of the best known trust companies in America. These vaults, as the wide-spread advertisements of the company are fond of showing, are protected by steel doors so heavy that it requires powerful engines to swing them to and fro, by grilled secondary doors each of which weighs several tons, and by a force of six men, fully armed, on guard night and day.

I received the trust company's annual bill for my safe deposit box yesterday. The number on the statement was not that of my own safe deposit box, but that of the safe deposit box of some utter stranger.

§ 12

Lifting Them Up.—Proof of the rationalizing and uplifting influence of

official censorship upon the movies, as afforded by the cuts ordered by the Pennsylvania State Board of Censors in a German film based upon the familiar old tear-squeezer, "Camille"—a film called "Poor Violette" in Germany and here produced by the Famous Players under the name of "The Red Peacock," with titles by Benjamin De Casseres:

Reel 1a

Eliminate subtitle: "Gaston du Pont, her satellite," and substitute: "Gaston Dupont, her fiancé."

Reel 3a

Eliminate subtitle: "Count Girgy sees an opportunity," and substitute: "Count Girgy sees an opportunity to vary his hectic life with an act of humanity."

b

Eliminate subtitle: "Violette, you may remain as maid in this house if you wish to," and substitute: "Violette, my house is lonely. Let me do an unselfish act. Be my ward and enjoy the comforts of my home as a sister would."

c

Eliminate views of Girgy embracing and kissing Violette after bringing her wrap to her, and all views of Girgy kissing and embracing Violette in any other reel, throughout the picture.

Reel 4a

Eliminate subtitle: "Alfred, I love you. Take me away from this," and substitute: "Alfred, I love you. I was happy as Girgy's ward until you returned. Take me away."

b

Eliminate views of Alfred shaking his head to express "No."

c

Insert, after Alfred has fallen at Violette's feet with his head in her lap and she is fondling and kissing him, subtitle: "Come to me, Violette; we will be married at once and say nothing about it."

Reel 5a

Insert a subtitle after: "I love Alfred. He is all I have in the world; I cannot let him go," when Violette sinks in chair and Claire goes out of the room, to this effect: Realizing that for his own reasons Alfred had not told his father of his marriage, Violette loyally kept the secret.

b

Insert a subtitle during the views

showing Violette leaving her home and before she goes to Gaston Dupont, to this effect: "With a courageous determination to find some means of honestly earning money to aid Alfred."

^c Eliminate subtitle: "I am here, ill in body and soul. Take me away, anywhere," and substitute: "I am here, ill in body and soul. You offered to help me. Are you good friend enough to take me, unselfishly, where I can learn to dance, so that I may earn money?"

^d Eliminate subtitle: "My dear Alfred: Forgive me, I am leaving you. My illness will become a greater and greater burden on you, and our financial troubles are growing each day. You have your future to consider. Violette." And substitute: "My dear Alfred: Forgive me, I am leaving you for a time that I may earn money to overcome our financial troubles, which are growing each day. I love you and hope for the future. Violette."

^e Eliminate all views in this and other reels following of Gaston Dupont embracing and kissing or making love to Violette.

^f Eliminate subtitle: "We will go south and there will soon be roses in your cheeks," and substitute: "You may trust me. We will go south and there will soon be roses in your cheeks. You shall learn to dance there."

Reel 6a

Eliminate all views of Gaston Dupont making love to Violette, kissing or embracing her.

^b Eliminate subtitle: "You'd better not dance this evening; your cough," and substitute: "You'd better rest this evening; your cough."

^c Eliminate the word "you" from subtitle: "It was my money you loved, not me—you."

^d Eliminate subtitle: "Now I know you for what you are—and I'm through with you," and substitute: "I'm through with you forever."

§ 13

Annual Memorial Service.—The Spring having arrived, let us repair to

our accustomed houses of worship, and petition God for the repose of the soul of the late James Harlan, of Iowa. This Harlan was a 100% American of the last generation. After an eminent public career in Iowa, including terms as Superintendent of Public Instruction and president of Iowa Wesleyan University, he became Secretary of the Interior in the second cabinet of Abraham Lincoln. One of the minor clerks in his department, at the wage of \$600 a year, was a poet named Walt Whitman. One day Harlan discovered that Whitman was the author of a book called "Leaves of Grass," and ordered him thrown out forthwith. Let us not forget this great Wesleyan statesman—James Harlan, of Iowa. A representative Iowan! An ornament to American history!

§ 14

De l'Amour.—One always loves the more when one is down with a sickness. In other words, when one's faculties are weakened. In other words, when one cannot think clearly. In other words, when one is, in comparison with one's normal self, a noble hollow-head.

§ 15

American Morals.—A few months ago there was produced in New York an American adaptation of the French farce, "The School for Cocottes." The adaptor satisfied American morals by changing the central character from the mistress of three successive men, all of whom she in turn deserts, to the wife of three successive men, all of whom she in turn deserts.

§ 16

And Once Again.—Women in general are far too intelligent to have any respect for so-called ideas. One seldom hears of them suffering and dying for any of the bogus Great Truths that men believe in. When a woman is on good

terms with her husband she is quite willing to accept his idiotic theorizings on any subject that happens to engage him, whether theological, economic, epistemological or political. When one hears of a Republican man who has a Democratic wife, or vice versa, it is always safe to assume that she has her eye on a handsomer, richer or more docile fellow, and is thinking of calling up a lawyer.

§ 17

Note on the Progress of Civilization in South Carolina.—Reduced reproduction of a four-column advertisement in the Spartanburg (S. C.) *Herald* for March 20, 1922:

WARNING!

Mothers and Fathers Beware!

Just 5 Weeks After Billy Sunday's
Wonderful Revival

"3 BIG DANCES THIS WEEK"

Advertised as the

"BIG EXPOSITION DANCES"

Spartanburg must furnish the
Girls and Boys

Will They Be Yours?

Read Communication to Editor
in this issue

Extract from the communication mentioned in the advertisement:

With the echoes of the voice of Billy Sunday, *God's own prophet*, scarcely having died out in the tabernacle; with the attention of the entire community centered on the worth while things of life; with the churches and Sunday schools receiving additions by the hundreds, it seems an outrage to flaunt this temptation in the faces of our young people, and defy the overwhelming Christian sentiment of the city. We are concerned for the moral welfare of the young people, many of whom have recently taken their stand for Christian ideals, and some to whom the dances will present real temptation to sacrifice these ideals. We challenge all ministers, the Billy Sunday club and Billy Sunday choir to give their emphatic disapproval to the proposed dances.

§ 18

International Trade.—When, as occasionally happens (though not often), sound literature is also popular literature, an inspection usually reveals the fact that it is popular, not because of its merits, but because of its defects. The Comstocks, fundamentally, are quite right when they argue that "Leaves of Grass" is simply a smutty book, despite the fact that it is now published by the publishers who virtuously suppressed "Sister Carrie." In the eyes of probably nine-tenths of the persons who buy it, it is simply a smutty book; they do not read it for the poetry, but for the aphrodisiacal images in such pieces as "A Woman Waits For Me." So with the works of Boccaccio, Rabelais, Balzac and Guy de Maupassant. Rabelais is always sold in the United States in a scarlet binding. I have never heard any genuine American mention any story by Maupassant that was not, in the American view, obscene; the rest are skipped over, even by pedagogues. And when mere pornographic interest is not the thing that keeps a dead author's book alive, it is usually something else that is quite as lowly. It is not Shakespeare the incomparable magician of words who survives on our stage, but Shakespeare the shallow melodramatist, mouthing a platitudinous and flatulent philosophy. It is not the Tolstoi of "War and Peace" who is remembered and respected by the great masses of men, but the Tolstoi who was the Russian Billy Sunday. And it is not Ibsen the master dramatist who continues to engage the Drama League, but Ibsen the tin-pot sociologist and metaphysician. The populace, even when it is feverishly literate, as in the United States, never really reads such an author as Homer, Bacon, or Goethe; it sticks to Dickens, Conan Doyle and Harold Bell Wright, with maybe an occasional glimpse at Gustave Doré's gaudy drawings for the "Divina Commedia." Even the Bible is seldom read as literature, save by village atheists.

The authors of one country who attain to popular success in some other country are almost always bad. For example, J. Fenimore Cooper, for nearly a century the most-read American in Germany, Scandinavia and Russia. At home, no one reads him any more save schoolboys who wade through him to escape the birch, but in Germany the "Lederstrumpf Erzählungen" still appear in dozens of editions and are read with great assiduity. Again, consider Eugène Sue. A Frenchman who has read "Le Juif Errant" and "Les Mystères de Paris" is probably as rare today as one who has read the complete canon of Corneille, but in America "The Wandering Jew," at least, is included in every series of yellow-backs, and every farm-hand has fought his way to the end of it. The French return the compliment by reading Poe—but reduce it to the common denominator by assuming that he was a great poet. The judgment is singularly shallow. Poe was really greatest as a critic, in which capacity, as I have elsewhere shown, the French are almost unaware of him. If they consider his prose at all, it is to admire the more florid of his tales—which have been taken into the intellectual heritage of France by being imitated by Emile Gaboriau! As I say, the French greatly overestimate his poetry. Surely no English-speaking critic of any intelligence would argue that he wrote more sound verse than Swinburne, or Wordsworth, or Browning, or even than Tennyson or Kipling, or that his high points were actually higher than the high points of any of these other poets. Nevertheless, the French put him immeasurably above all five, just as our own dominant opinion puts Gorky above Andrieff, and Brieux above Hervieu, and Knut Hamsun above Johan Bojer, and Blasco Ibañez above Baroja, and D'Annunzio above Carducci, and Sudermann above such men as Ludwig Thoma (I mean as dramatist), Frank Wedekind and Hugo von Hofmannsthal.

It is a curious thing, passing through Europe, to note what current American books are most translated. In Italy, the last time I was there, I found all the book-shops full of Old Cap Colliers in the vulgate, but not a single bookseller that I approached had ever heard of Dreiser or Frank Norris. In Spain I found translations of the whole works of Dr. Orison Swett Marden and Ralph Waldo Trine, but nothing by William James. In Germany Trine was also conspicuous, with Jack London to bear him company. In Denmark I found that even Dr. Georg Brandes confined his view of contemporary American literature to London and Upton Sinclair. Bulwer-Lytton is more popular in all the continental countries than any other English novelist. Joseph Conrad has been translated into German, at least in part—I remember buying "Im Taifun," capitally translated by Elise Eckert, in Engelhorn's Allgemeine Roman-Bibliothek—but if there are German versions of Hardy, Meredith and George Moore I have yet to hear of them. The Germans, however, have almost as many different versions of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" as they have of Cooper's Indian tales. The Portuguese, too, esteem that eminent work, and read it assiduously as "A Cabana do Pae Tomás," as the Danes and Norwegians esteem it as "Onkel Toms Hytte." Modern Portuguese literature is very scanty, and even good translations are rare in it. Finland, Hungary, Rumania and Japan have all of the Ibsen plays in the vulgate, but Portugal has but two or three of them, and these seem to be clumsy versions of French translations. But Cooper, Mrs. Stowe and Nick Carter have all been done into the tongue of Camoens, and Hall Caine, Bulwer-Lytton and Rider Haggard with them—not, however, Howells, or Mark Twain, or Whitman, or Conrad, or Hardy, or even Kipling. Of Frenchmen, the Lisbon booksellers offer Eugène Sue and Paul de Kock in complete editions, but only a few scattered volumes of Anatole France. Only the Germans seem to

suspect that "Uncle Tom's Cabin" is not literature of the first water. In the exhaustive catalogue of the chief German wholesaler of books I find it listed among "Jugendschriften für das Alter von 8-12 Jahren." Elsewhere it is treated quite seriously.

Both the English and the Americans, when dealing with Continental writers, fall into astounding aberrations. George Bernard Shaw's extravagant overpraise of Brieux is too recent to have been forgotten; it probably started the Brieux vogue in the United States. At about the time that Shaw assaulted Anglo-Saxondom with his pronunciamento the Alliance Française, an organization of Englishmen professedly devoted to the study of French culture, invited René Bazin to London as a salient ornament of French literature! The thing was about as intelligent as inviting Brander Matthews to Paris as an ornament to American criticism. Bazin seized the chance to make a sensation: he denounced Stéphane Mallarmé! Well, let us not forget the late Major General Roosevelt's praise of Henry Bordeaux, the French Gene Stratton Porter. The French author most read in the United States in late years (after, of course), Sue and Paul de Kock, has been Maurice Le Blanc; the French dramatists most esteemed have been Bernstein, Rostand and Brieux. Anatole France, competently translated, remains one of our worst-sellers; Molière is played in our theatres as seldom as Schiller or Sheridan; it is only a small sect of diabolists that is ever conscious of such writers as Rémy de Gourmont and Joris-Karl Huysmans. Even Balzac, surely the greatest of French novelists, is in no sense familiar to the general run of American novel-readers; his chief circulation has always been in the form

of hideously bound sets for the newly intellectual, with obscene etchings by almost anonymous artists. As for Zola, his fate in America has been almost tragic. His "Nana" is sold as pornography, pure and simple; most of his other works are absolutely unknown. His "Germinal" could be got down only by changing its title to "Nana's Brother," and so making it appear to be merely another pornographic book.

Even between England and the United States, with no barrier of language to cause confusion, there are some amazing exchanges. The most successful American play in London in late years has been "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch"; the most successful English novel in America has been "The Sheik." Eden Phillpotts is regarded as a respectable third-rater at home; in the United States he is treated with the utmost consideration. Two English poets, since the day of Richard Le Gallienne, have immigrated to the Republic and come to eminence. They are Edgar A. Guest and Alfred Noyes. An English dramatist and an English novelist have accompanied them. They are Cosmo Hamilton and Coningsby Dawson. Guest, of course, is read largely by morons, but Noyes has plenty of customers among the *intelligentsia*. If you would discover what a typical literate Englishman thinks of his strophes turn to page 325 of Arnold Bennett's "Books and Things." But he is so greatly esteemed in America that an American professor recently printed a book hailing him as the greatest living poet, and even before that an American university had solemnly summoned him to a chair. It is almost as if Oxford or the Sorbonne should issue a call to Cale Young Rice.



The Modernist

By P. E. Rogers

HIS heart is a large refrigerator with golden doors. Upon sharp-pointed silver hook, in many rows, he hangs his dead emotions. Whenever called for, he takes them out, tenderly, fresh and pink-skinned, like newly slaughtered lambs.



Day of Ice

By George O'Neil

*THE rain has frozen on the trees;
Now they are plumes of splintered glass.
The wide pond and the corn-heaps freeze
And steel glints in the grass.*

*The glaze locks every stem apart,
And not a branch dares bend or shake.
Quiet, quiet, crowded heart!
Whatever stirs must break.*



TO attain immortality a man must be hated, a woman must be loved



Glunz

By Leonard Lanson Cline

I

ONLY two categories of human conduct were recognizable to Glunz. A man was right or else he was wrong. If he disagreed with Glunz, then he must be wrong. And in time of dispute Glunz tolerated no nice distinctions, no extenuating circumstances, no possibilities of error. The pleas of his passengers he swept aside with a crushing "Aw, shut yer trap! Yuh pays yer fare or yuh gets off th' car." Should the passenger prove stubborn, Glunz well knew that Flanagan, the motorman, would come pushing down the aisle, armed with the iron handle of his motor, and the two of them were more than a match for almost any woman, old man or schoolboy.

This morning, the passenger did not wait for Flanagan. He dropped a second nickel in Glunz's fare box, stepped timidly into the car and sank into a seat. Glunz rang two bells and the car lurched ahead up Front street.

Indifferent to the murmurs of his passengers, Glunz stared gloomily out through the back windows of the car. He was always indifferent to hostile demonstrations after such episodes as this, but usually his calm was due to the sense of power, that throbbed through the slow veins of Glunz with a pleasurable exhilaration. After such skirmishes, when he would call the names of the streets as they slipped past, it was a song of triumph; it served the purposes of a fanfare of fifteen trumpets, and was no less loud, and no less unintelligible. But today the thrill was feeble, and Glunz never even tried to

call the streets; and his indifference was entirely a matter of preoccupation with more serious matters.

Glunz was thinking of Sadie and of his creditors. Sadie and her ambition for a fur coat, like that yellow and black striped one Mrs. Lammister was wearing. On the transparent wage of a street car conductor Glunz was unable to buy fur coats. He was able only to buy porridge for the bellies of the seven little interpolations that time had edited into the amorous duet of the Glunz romance. Yet Glunz was just as honest as Lammister, and worked much harder: Lammister, who peddled dubious oil stocks, and was reputed all through the neighborhood to be as crooked as he was fat. A slight suspicion that possibly honesty was not the best policy glimmered a moment in Glunz's consciousness, but the fog was too thick.

All day long Glunz writhed with the problem. He scored seven ejections from the street car, enough ordinarily to send him home to Sadie and boiled potatoes with a song in his heart. At six o'clock he turned the car over to the night shift, settled up his accounts, and trudged down Front street toward his home.

A cheery voice struggled against heavy odds to get his attention. "Take you home, Glunz," the voice persisted; and Glunz looked up to see Lammister sitting at the wheel of his automobile, drawn up to the curb and with the door commandingly open. In a little while Glunz realized that somehow he had got into the seat beside the broker.

"I been thinking," Lammister was

saying, "that we ain't been very neighborly, for people that's been living side by side now for four months. So I decided to let you in, Glunz, on a proposition I got that seems just made for you. Make you some money, eh, Glunz? That's the sort of neighbor I am. Now, you borrow a couple a hundred dollars and that buys the stock, see? Then next month they buys out this here Pigeon claim, and the stock jumps to double, and you sells. Two hundred dollars for the little lady, and no trouble to you!"

Stopping in front of the Glunz one-story frame and the adjacent Lammister two-story brick, it became, after a moment, apparent to Glunz that a van was backed up in front of his neighbor's door.

"Moving?" asked Glunz.

"Nope," replied Lammister. "Selling out. The missus wants some new furniture, so I thought I'd do the thing right. Everything bran new, from the parlor carpet to the frying pan. Mahogany."

All through dinner, Glunz thought and thought and thought. Then he got out pen and paper, and began, "Dear Uncle Henry." It was like putting a mummy through a wringer, but the drops of thought squeezed out somehow from hour to hour:

How are you Uncle Henry. We are all well. The Weather is cold and wet. I would like to see you soon. We aint seen each other for 19 years. Now Uncle Henry I have got behind in my paments on my house and I would like to borry \$500 for to make paments on my house. I will pay back the money the furst of next month. Now Uncle Henry I am sorry to ask you fer this but I have got behind in the paments on my house and Sadie is very sick. Thanks Uncle Henry fer this lone and I will pay you back the ferst of next month. Yours truly,

WM. GLUNZ.

Glunz read and reread this epistle, and finally made a change. He crossed out the \$500 and wrote in \$200. Then he licked the flap of the envelope and smeared it shut. But a thought rose to a slow April in Glunz's mind. He tore open the envelope and crossed out the

\$200, stubbing beneath it the figures \$400.

The letter at last sealed and stamped, and addressed to Henry Glunz, in the adjacent town of Applegate, Glunz looked up from his labor to see Sadie gazing curiously at him.

"Writn a letter?" inquired Sadie.

Glunz caressingly cuffed her ears. Sadie ran swearing coquettishly into the bedroom, and Glunz, who was feeling better now, with a sheepish grimace followed after. From a close-up of Glunz's face one might have concluded he was just entering a burlesque house on a public square at high noon. Or a blind pig.

And now for a whole week Glunz's cumbersome good spirits were at their height. He mooed the dulcet cadences of the street names, and achieved a bel-lowing diapason at the more important intersections.

Glunz was a born street car conductor. The great men of the world are those that conceive early in life their ambitions and never lose sight of them. And Glunz, at five, showed talents in his own field comparable with those of a Mozart in his. He played all day at street car. He was passionately fond of bumping his wagon into the wagons of smaller boys and sending them bawling home to mama. Sometimes he coerced them into consenting to be the passengers on his car, and then he was always putting them off. After graduating arduously from the third grade, Glunz quit school and became a butcher's boy. Here he did get some pleasure out of watching the skilful Schmierle cutting pigs to pieces, but never once did he forget his life's goal. He frequented the pool room on the corner next the car barns, and gawked in admiration of the conductors and motormen who gathered there to pitch pennies. And at last Glunz had doffed his smeared white apron and become captain of his own street car.

Proud all week was Glunz—with twenty shares of P. & Q. Gold Field

stock in his pocket—in the anticipation of Sadie's fur coat. But then came the news, page one in the *Herald*, that Lammister had skipped. Not a stick of the broker's possessions was found by the detectives who went to his house on Front Street. Neighbors informed them that Lammister and the striped female had moved a week before.

Glunz had what comfort he could in the knowledge that his part in the catastrophe had been one of impeccable honesty. Once or twice, to be sure, there hesitated in his mind the least little suspicion that possibly, in *every* instance, *absolute* honesty *might* not be the *one* best policy. But it withered unsmelled like a violet in a barnyard.

That very night Providence rewarded Glunz by giving him a miraculous opportunity to make good his loss.

II

BROODING and surly, Glunz was forging slowly homeward when two men, standing in front of the white stone building on the corner, accosted him. They wanted to know if he had seen the ad yet. Glunz said no, he hadn't seen the ad. He thought a little while, and then he inquired what ad they meant. They explained. They were selling their house, and there was to be an auction, only nobody had appeared to bid for it. Here was their house, just waiting to be sold; they would let it go for almost nothing, and yet all the world seemingly was ignorant of this amazing opportunity to get rich overnight.

"I thought that there building was th' ladies' library," meditated Glunz.

"You ain't never seen no ladies going in, have you?" countered one of the strangers.

Glunz thought and thought and thought, and finally confessed that he hadn't ever seen any ladies going in.

"Well," averred the stranger, "it used to be the ladies' library, but it ain't no more. We didn't take the sign off because . . . well, you see, we sorta like

it there. That's a damn pretty sign. It goes with the house."

One week later, in his own living-room, Glunz handed \$200 more of Uncle Henry's money to the two gentlemen of the white stone dwelling. He received a receipt signed by Mr. Jones and Mr. Smith, and a ring of rusty keys. The only trouble was, Glunz gradually realized, two hours later, that not one of the keys would fit any available orifice. The next morning Glunz renewed his attempt to take possession of his new property. Things moved too fast that day for Glunz to apprehend really what was going on. He was eventually arrested on complaint of the septuagenarian Miss Simpkins, librarian of the Gideon Ladies' Library, as a lunatic. Glunz was released, however, after examination. The psychiatry clinic of the police courts reported him only slightly sub-normal, and quite harmless. The superintendent of the street car company assured the police that he was one of its best conductors.

Glunz went dourly back to work. The twelfth man he was compelled that afternoon to put off the car was an irate little bristleback carrying a large and ancient carpetbag. He demurred so hotly at being made to pay two fares that Glunz bore menacingly down upon him, and the little fellow stepped backward off the car, landing on his no longer abundantly padded sit-spot. Frantic with sixty-year-old rage he jumped up and down in the street and screamed that he was killed. This attracted a nearby policeman, who proceeded to take the old man's name.

Glunz, so-to-speak excited, heard with ears more keen. He heard his victim declare that his name was Henry Glunz, of Applegate, and that his back was broken; and that he was on his way to visit his dear nephew, William Glunz.

Mechanically, Glunz stepped to the pavement. His whole consciousness was in a turmoil. He could not speak as the awfulness of this culminating tragedy became, gradually, little by little, more apparent. What had he done

to deserve the misfortunes that, in two weeks' time, had so completely crushed him? He wanted to beg his uncle's pardon, and if he had had a few minutes more he might have managed to speak.

But now Glunz noticed policeman and uncle together leap madly away from him. He seemed to hear shrieks, cries of "Look out!" a panic pushing of people about in the car. He wondered what could be the matter. Then another sensation wormed its way along the difficult olfactory nerve to his cortex.

He seemed to distinguish the odor of burned hair, of charred meat. At the same time it was as if something began tapping him gently on the head, like a child with a tack hammer knocking on the portals of the Tombs.

Slowly Glunz looked up. A trolley wire, falling some minutes before, had landed squarely on his head. He started to move, but it was too late.

Glunz was already standing uncertainly at the pearly gates, scratching his head, and trying to figure it all out.



Renunciation

By R. Lynn Riggs

*YOU were too near to me,
And so I came to be
Fearful of losing you;
Then suddenly*

*You were gone a-dancing
Far, far away,
Like a petal flitting
On a holiday.*

*Like a petal blowing
You were fair to see,
Fleeter than a wee faun
Or a fairy.*

*And I, who was fearful,
Felt untrue,
When I was too joyful
At losing you!*



The Higher Learning in America

IX

Vassar

By Geneva Harrison

I

EVERY law gets itself broken. Every rule has an exception. Some time or other the moon will go into eclipse, and now and again a woman may be logical—by mistake. But the most reassuring paradox of all is presented by the man to whom wine, woman and song have not proved fatal.

Such a creature once existed. Exactly what song did for him has never been recorded, but then, I have always suspected that song was affixed merely to round out the threadbare trilogy of terrors—to put rhythm into the revel. Wine and woman are the deadly allies. But to the gentleman in question they not only proved innocuous, but positive inspirations to beneficence, foresight and high achievement. Out of a foaming bumper of honest malt liquor he created deathless halls of learning, and then he took mid-Victorian woman and set her upon her feet, secure in the face of the world without her bottle of salts.

His name was Mathew Vassar. He was a brewer by vocation, a friend of woman by avocation. Settled upon the paternal farm, already graced by a successful brewery up there in the hills near Poughkeepsie, N. Y., Mathew made a still greater success of an already profitable business, and after accumulating a sound fortune, courageously set about establishing a school where women could learn other arts than china-painting and guitar-playing. In 1861 he

incorporated Vassar Female College. It was so called until 1867, when feminine higher education began to be generally accepted. Then it became plain Vassar College, and so it remains today.

Architecturally speaking, Vassar originally consisted of one great rambling red-brick building, anything but post-impressionistic in character, and frequently referred to as the Tuilleries by historically inclined humorists. It still exists. Main Hall, as it is now called, is none the less beloved. There centres the romance of the college, there lurk the crinoline ghosts, and there—oh, there are the centipedes, and mice, and vast draughty halls of another era. Moreover, it is made sacred by the residence of the entire senior class, and of some hundred or so of the luckier freshmen. It boasts a medieval dining hall, black and gold reception halls, and the "engaged" parlor, with its vivid rose appointments and somber black ceiling and rug—a severe test for even the most determined fiancé, for he has the desperate sensation of being caught fiercely in Stygian jaws as he enters.

There is also the senior parlor—sacred to the use of the senior class, and the freshman parlor done in bright chintz and wicker—blatantly cheerful. There is "J," a large empty chamber with a good floor, where the dance-mad seek solace after dinner. There is the college post-office and mail boxes, where three times daily the famous mail rush is enacted with dramatic effect. There are

the grocery store and the candy kitchen, and the college offices, and the "double alleyways," and the "single alleyways," and the towers, and the marble entrance lobby—graphically called "soap-palace"—and the asthmatic, octogenarian elevator, and other nooks and crannies which combine to make of Main the most atmospheric building on the campus.

Several of the other buildings indulge the same architectural state of mind. There is the ancient Observatory, where the mysterious college star-gazers congregate, and the Museum and Music Hall, a unique combination, with its worn practice and lecture rooms and its efficiently modern Little Theatre. The physics laboratory and the laundry and the outgrown gymnasium are also of the red-brick era. A trim quadrangle of dormitories is flanked on the north by two others—Josselyn and North, the latter with its tower of incomparable views. Recitation halls, science laboratories, president's house and the rest are forgotten in view of the gray library—English Gothic—eloquent in its simplicity. One remembers this library when the Pons Asinorum has fallen in a heap of forgotten dust. There is also Taylor Gate, the most picturesque entrance to the campus, and the chapel, another truly restful and beautiful building, whose rear elevation, as viewed from the Shakespeare Garden some distance below, has all the charm and strength of a French chateau. Youthful dreams a-plenty are tucked up under the eaves of the organ loft.

The Shakespeare Garden just mentioned is a pleasant spot where are planted all the flowers ever mentioned by the Bard. It is gracefully terraced. (Oh the labor those terraces cost! for I was one of a group of heroines who spent a memorable spring vacation during the war in making them, wheelbarrows and all!)—and at its base flows a brook with willows trailing their tips in the water, lure for many a love-lorn Ophelia.

The Open Air Theatre, however, with

its great pines and lake and hills for back-drop—is the outdoor feature of the college. Who that has seen the maid of Astolot dreamily afloat upon the lake in the torchlight, or the Oriental romancers playing among colored lanterns, or Jeanne D'Arc triumphant, a radiant vision of youthful inspiration astride her white steed—can forget the poetry of the place? There is also the Athletic Circle, with its trim circular garden, where track meets go on, and baseball and outdoor basket ball. There are tennis courts and hockey fields, and there is Students' Building, anonymously donated and completely enjoyed. This is the Drury Lane of Vassar, a generous hall with an ample stage and the atmosphere of the theatre. Here the college Siddonses and Bernhards strut and fret their hour—and then return to their rooms to cram for the inevitable examination. Here the rehearsals and cast-suppers take place, and she is a luckless girl who has not gone dramatics mad at Vassar. Students' Building is not exclusively designed for dramatic purposes but for the general use of the student body. However, dramatics, readings and recitals comprise the major portion of its programme.

Topographically speaking, all this, set in among 800 acres of little lakes and woods and hills—is Vassar.

II

BUT buildings and landscapes are not the factors that determine the personality of a college. What is it that goes on within and without these Vassar buildings? What has determined the democracy, the dignity, the daring and the dogmatism of the place? What has made it at once intelligent and self-satisfied? Progressive and hide-bound?

Academically speaking, Vassar stands in the first rank, as such things go in America. Her standard is high and entrance is gained only upon examination by the college board. The course, partially required, partially elective, leads to the baccalaureate degree. It is

planned to give a broad general education. There is an opportunity for a limited amount of specialized study in the junior and senior years, but post-graduate study is almost entirely absent, although the degree of master of arts is sometimes given. However, these cases are so rare that it is only fair to say that the undergraduate body constitutes the college. This makes for great unity of interest. It also, no doubt, leaves the undergraduate to feel her importance and integrity too keenly, and to go too smugly upon her immature way. However, the advantages of sympathetic youth perhaps outbalance those of superior wisdom.

The Vassar faculty is highly diversified, and full of contradictions and delights and anachronisms. There are professors who belong back with the crinoline; there are those who are far too brilliant to be good teachers; there are those who are not brilliant enough to be bad teachers; there are those who pose; there are those who write poetry; there are those who tear poetry to pieces; there are those who ride bicycles; those who are absent-minded; those who remember too much; those who take New York week-ends; those who don't.

Dogs seem to be one of their most common weaknesses. There is Jetsam, for instance, Burgess Johnson's black mongrel, who with true canine flattery reflects the energetic humor, unpretentious good-will and complete independence of his master. Of course Burgess would have a dog named Jetsam, who as sure as shooting is always on the scene of action. Then there is Woodbridge Riley's elegant slim greyhound named Victory-for-the-Allies, or Vic for short. Vic had a brother or a son named Y. M. C. A. Secretary, but he died during the war. It is a rare treat of a fresh spring morning to see Dr. Riley trailing across the campus in a smart tweed suit, a nosegay from his exquisite little garden perfectly matching his tie or his socks, and his long lean Vic nosing the ground just behind him. Professor Riley is an Epicurean, and

whether he wins his war against Christian Science or not, and whether he is now talking about the Monad of Monads or planting tulip bulbs in his garden, I can thank him for some of the most interesting hours of my life. His courses in philosophy are a joy forever.

Then, beside Jetsam and Vic, it seems to me as I look back over two long years that President MacCracken had a dog some time or other—of course, a Scotch collie—a delightful actor who frequently appeared in college dramatics. His temperament, however, proved too intense, and when he began killing sheep and chickens, he had to be removed. (Just remember that Vassar has a large farm and dairy for her exclusive use, so that sheep, cows and chickens are realities and not frail figures of speech.) Prexy is young for a man in his position, and his courageous energy in certain directions has once or twice endangered his career. However, unlike his Scotch pet, he knows where to stop, and he realizes that sometimes patience is more effective than killing.

There is also an embarrassment of flotsam cur life about the campus, and with this Jetsam indulges all his sociabilities and gladly shares his reportorial jokes. Vic, on the other hand, doesn't even notice that it exists as he wanders aloof in a Schopenhauer trance. But as for bona fide faculty dogs—I don't recall any others. However, there's Miss Margaret Floy Washburn, the psychologist, who has a terrible cat-complex. She adores them, and one of my most vivid memories is that of meeting her one morning in the grocery store, playing with the grocer's bourgeoisie Maltese and melodiously crooning "pretty Pussy." She wasn't even ashamed of being caught. Then there is Miss Winifred Smith, of the English department, who is perfectly devoted to her bicycle. She can even talk while she's riding it, and she talks so well!

There are plenty of others who help to make the faculty-student relationship a pleasant and informal one. In gen-

eral, for faculty folk—dignified and austere by tradition—they are unusually good sportsmen. They eagerly respond when asked to appear in college dramatics and pageants; they enjoy being taken on hikes; one or two will even be seen at the Poughkeepsie movies when "A Doll's House" or a revised "Admirable Crichton" has been adroitly advertised; and perhaps what is more sportsmanlike still, they are friendly among themselves, enjoying a very sincere camaraderie.

There should be more men on the faculty than there are, for those already there are in grave danger of being spoiled. Although the number of girls in Vassar is supposed to be limited to a thousand, it is a large enough group to become fairly weary of itself. The cry of "man" on the campus is electrical. The elopement of a maid with a gardener serves as nerve stimulus for a week. The elopement of a student from a second story window of Main would be still more esteemed; Heaven forbid that I should suggest that Vassar would be a dangerous place for single new professors! But the absence of the male is sometimes felt, and especially the absence of his point of view—not because it is any more intelligent than that of the female, but because it is different.

I also believe there should be fewer Vassar graduate professors. Not only among the faculty are there too many of these graduates, but also among the wardens. It makes for a kind of ingrowing alma mater consciousness that is frequently very blind.

III

NON-ACADEMICALLY speaking, the college life is in the hands of its four associations: the students, the Christian, the Athletic and the Dramatic, or Philatheis, as the latter classically calls itself. The first of these, the Students', seeks "to permeate Vassar life with its democratic spirit, and to hold before the college the ideal of honor, not as a name but as a fundamental, working principle

in community coöperation." Vassar is run on the honor system—of course coöperating with the wardens and their rules. This means that, with true self-governing consciences, we impose our own policemen upon ourselves, who whistle furiously at us if we ride on the new spring grass; it means that we agree to obey the ten o'clock bell for silence, as well as numerous other quiet hour regulations; it means that when as a body we heroically decide to give up the fatal weed, we must needs individually throw our Pall Malls and Melachrios and Milos along with our personal liberty out of the window, and never again blow a ring within three miles of the campus. All this intricate self-government is regulated by the hall presidents and their underlings, the proctors, who tip-toe about and shush the raucous and in general endeavor to keep order.

There are frequent students' meetings where all the issues of college life are discussed. At very radical moments during the college year salutary mass meetings are held. When discontent due to a very limited cut-system arose, it was the students' organization that took up the matter with the authorities. When it began to be generally felt that four week-end leaves a semester were not sufficient, it was again Students' that waged the war.

The Christian Association attends to all the charitable activities of the college. It includes big-sistering at the Home of the Friendless in Poughkeepsie, visits to the Old Ladies' Home, and the direction of various recreational and educational activities at Lincoln Center—the local settlement house organized by the association and incidentally the only community center in Poughkeepsie. It also includes Silver Bay, Eaglesmere and the Red Cross among its activities, and it gives financial assistance to foreign schools. "Christian practice of Christian principles" is its aim, and while it is far from the most popular association in college, it does its share. Vassar is non-sectarian, but the student

body is required to go to chapel every evening at seven o'clock for a few moments of pious meditation before the evening study, classes or frivolities begin. Our presence is also desired every Sunday but one each month. This fourth Sabbath is designated Town Sunday, and on which we have the privilege of visiting the Poughkeepsie churches. However, it might be better and more appropriately called Study Sunday or Hike Sunday or Bike Sunday.

Then there is the Athletic Association, with its hockey for the fall, its basket ball for the winter, and its track for the spring, to say nothing for its baseball. Oh, those glorious Faculty-Student baseball games when

No one will have to urge us
When it's time to cheer for Burgess!

Field Day also comes under this energetic association, with its interclass competition in races, hurdles, high jumps, broad jumps and so forth. Blue ribbons are won and so are silver cups. But proudest of all are the salmon pink V's won by the Varsity basket ball and hockey teams, and the rose and grey banners won by victorious classes. Happy is the senior parlor which boasts an abundance of banners!

The Dramatic Association is perhaps the most generally popular of the four associations; of all Vassar's non-academic activities those of Phil—short for Philaletheis—come first. There is always a play in prospect, in rehearsal or in presentation, and Vassar is proud of her dramatic achievement. Phil contracts to put on three plays every year, called respectively the First, Second and Third Hall Plays. First and Second Hall plays are presented in Students' Building in the fall and mid-winter respectively. Third Hall is presented in the spring in the outdoor theatre, and is usually a thing of real beauty. These plays are chosen, cast and rehearsed by the students, and they also do the scene-building, painting and lighting. Students' Building has a thoroughly equipped lighting system, and each class

has among its numbers some experienced electricians. The outdoor theatre has powerful electric lamps which illuminate the stage from high towers built at the rear of the amphitheatre.

Such plays as Shaw's "Cæsar and Cleopatra," Rostand's "L'Aiglon" and Percy MacKaye's "A Thousand Years Ago" are presented. There are frequent explorations into the classical, the Celtic and the Russian dramatic literature, and now and then a very courageous and self-confident Phil committee will attempt a Broadway hit. Such experiments are apt to prove painful, though no more painful than many of the originals. The president of Philaletheis, elected from the senior class by the entire college, along with the other association presidents, spends her entire summer vacation—as do her chosen Hall Play chairmen—reading plays and plays and plays. The rule is one a day. From this mass of reading the president and the three chairmen choose the three plays for presentation.

Then come the terrible try-outs, when aspirants must stand or fall according to their ability, with an entire play committee and the president of Phil looking critically and sophisticatedly on. Of course, the star system creeps in, even at Vassar, and certain tried favorites cannot help flaunting their past glories in the faces of the still impressionable judges. However, sudden new bursts of genius take the college by storm every now and then, and there are laurels a-plenty.

Besides Phil there is a younger and perhaps more vital dramatic movement at Vassar, known as the Vassar Dramatic Workshop. It was inaugurated by Miss Gertrude Buck, a former pupil of Dr. Baker, of the Harvard 47 Workshop, after which it was patterned. Miss Buck conducted the class in play writing which furnished the plays, and she also supervised the productions. Her death this year is deeply lamented, and it is to be hoped that another may be found to carry on her work. It was the plan of the Workshop to present

three bills each year in the Little Theatre, each bill consisting of three one-act plays or a long play. These plays were produced and acted, as well as written, by the students in conjunction with Miss Buck. It was a younger, freer and more democratic institution than the revered Phil.

Still non-academically speaking, there are many lesser social and semi-social groups. There are, of course, the musical clubs, the glee club, the mandolin club and the college orchestra, which valiantly assists Phil. Then there are the many little clubs, Le Club Française, Der Deutsche Verein, the Granddaughter's Club, the Wake Robin Club for the ornithological enthusiasts, the Suffrage Club, the Socialist Club, the Locality Clubs and so forth, each no doubt answering the urgent need of souls. There are no sororitical clans, which is one of Vassar's good fortunes. But there is a debating society which has beaten the only male competitors it ever had. The occasion was a debate with Colgate, April 17th, 1920, and the subject:

Resolved: That the recognition of labor unions by employers is essential to successful collective bargaining.

Vassar took the negative and came off victorious, and it must be remembered that there is no such thing as chivalry among judges of debating.

Nor does the social life end here. From the moment the freshman enters Taylor Gate, though perhaps academically roughly treated, she is pampered socially. She is greeted by elaborate reception committees, and her senior adviser more than fills the bill of indefatigable attendant, chaperone and anxious mother. She is wined and dined at the Inn, the Lodge, the Flag Shop—a fair subterranean rival to any of the village dug-outs—and even downtown at Smith's, the home of the coughdrop. She is given a thrilling party by the enthusiastic sophomores and another by her sisters, the juniors. Life is so full of pleasures and novelties that she has

time only to gasp between theorems. Moreover, there are the dazzling Junior and Senior Proms, at which she is sometimes permitted to look on, and in some cases of intense friendship, to share somebody's man for a dance or two.

Then, of course, there are the ice-carnivals in the winter, with lanterns and leaping bonfires and slim, white rhythmic figures skating to the tunes of the busy band, and there are skiing for the courageous and resilient, and superb tobogganing, and cross-country snowshoeing for the adventurous. In the fall and the spring there is step-singing, at which the juniors and freshmen get together after dinner on the steps of Strong Hall, and the seniors and sophomores on Rocky steps—and endeavor to prove their devotion to each other by singing such songs as :

We have come to sing you a song-ski,
Standing there on the steps of Strong-ski,
Juniors, juniors, you are true blue-ski,
Sweetest girls we ever knew-ski.

As the chapel bell gives its warning, the four classes unite and march to chapel singing the college marching song. It is a brave sight—that long, sinuous line of girls in their spring pastels, moving proudly under the maternal pines! On the whole, Vassar is rather urgently vocal, for besides this delightful custom, there is almost always some serenading or other going on, in honor of an election or a faculty member—for every class has a chosen faculty member—or a new faculty baby or a sprained ankle.

And then there is Founder's Day, appointed in memory of the founder, a charming free holiday in the spring, when classes are discontinued and baseball games and outdoor pageants and song contests and various novel amusements take place. Poets are imported to read their poetry, lutenists to play their lutes, opera companies to give their operas. An early visit is made to the deceased brewer's grave by the President of the college, and the Founder's

Day Committee—composed of faculty and students—and this is followed by a President's address, from the steps of his home. Then the programme of festivities begins. The song contest—an inter-class competition in which each class offers a brand new song to the college, is a very exciting event. Three judges choose the best of the four and it is added to the Vassar repertoire, to be handed down to posterity. Another of the oldest customs of the college is the Sophomore Tree Ceremony. Every class has a tree, which is marked with its seal. This tree is chosen by the class in the spring of its sophomore year, when class consciousness awakes in earnest and class rings and the class marching song are acquired. The chosen tree, selected by a class committee, is kept secret from the rest of the college until the eve of the ceremonies, which usually consist of music and dancing—a sort of dramatic interlude, effective if somewhat mysterious, and occasionally very beautiful. All future class victories are cheered and sung under the spreading branches of this tree, and all defeats and tragedies are mourned. I recall that two of my most respectable class-mates got so aroused by the ceremonial frenzy that they spent the entire night at the roots of the tree—counting over the stars reflected in the shiny new seal.

If all these sociabilities are not enough to console the home-sick freshman, she has the college publications to turn to for solace. There is the *Miscellany Weekly*, a good little paper with its Campus Chat humor, and its attempt at policies and profundities. There is also the *Miscellany Monthly*, of higher literary flavor, with prose, poetry and reviews. The *Vassar Quarterly* is a publication chiefly for the *Alumnæ*.

IV

ONE really cannot know Vassar without some mention of the cider mill out in the hills, where snappy fall days will

find half the college imbibing the amber juice, and stowing away cart-wheel after dough-nut and cruller after cart-wheel. . . . And then of course the hairpins all over the campus! They tell a story! . . . The Poughkeepsie trolley—that ran in leaps and bounds, usually off the track. I hear it has been replaced by a dignified new one. In that case I shall taxi or more likely walk up to the college the next time I go to Poughkeepsie. . . . One can't emphasize the mail rush too strongly. . . . Nor the dim flag shop with its somber booths. Nor the long hikes across the river. . . . Nor the forbidden nights on the hill under the stars, rolled in a blanket. . . . Nor the country horseback rides. . . . Nor war-time Vassar with her modified programme, Red Cross, sugarless breakfasts, personal economies, unadorned parties, propaganda plays and pageants, Liberty Loan Drives, knitting needles. . . . Nor the New York week-ends when Vassar is suddenly brought face to face with reality after long periods of collegiate rustication in the far backwoods of Poughkeepsie, when Vassar goes to the theatres and symphonies with avidity, and shops all its allowance away so that it has to charge all its history pads and books and devil sandwiches for the following month. . . . Nor the confirmed bridge players who play all night and bluff all day—and have nervous breakdowns in the infirmary. . . . Nor the spring lollipops and sweaters. . . . Nor the picnics up on Sunset Hill where weenies are wistfully eaten to the accompaniment of the western symphony color organ. . . . Nor the Circle at night with its lilacs and soft spring flower beds and great pines piercing the little high stars, where we run to lose those twenty pounds we have gained since freshman year—and lie panting in the cool, damp grass, spartan if not spare. . . . Nor Sunday morning choir rehearsals in cotters that never fit. . . . Nor the torchlight processions on glowing special occasions. . . .

But there are a few things I should like to forget. One of them is the type

system. Just as certainly as there is a successful business man type, there is a successful college girl type. You know her by her gait, her clothes, the way she thinks. She is popular not only non-academically but academically. Her mind has learned to grasp the routine high spots. She will get A's where your inveterate individualist may have to face B's, C's and even D's. She will be rushed by class offices, team captaincies and freshmen, while your individualist sits idly in her tower, toying with her latest five-act drama and dreaming over the sunset.

I repeat my previous criticism of the ingrowing Vassar faculty, and the dearth of male professors, for I sincerely believe it is just. It is not that the masculine mind is necessarily better equipped to cope with professional problems, but that the presence of masculine point of view is surely necessary to a generally normal state of mind. The atmosphere of a girls' college out in the country, with many girls and women and a small handful of men, with its insistent interests and enclosed

occupations, is bound at times to become a bit strained and unreal. There should be every possible effort made to keep it in as active touch as possible with the world outside. In some cases that same world is a sudden and rather bitter shock after four years just this side of reality.

V

BUT, if I may now be allowed to conclude sentimentally, all my life I shall remember a lush hillside in spring, fragrant with downy apple blooms and starred with violets among the long grass; that same hillside in winter, white and cold and radiant; a dim twilight walk about a misty lake, daffodil-rimmed, and out past a low pine-plushed path, with a soft bell tolling and the muted notes of an organ playing in the distance, detached, wistful; and all my life to the final hour will drift to me, cool and pungent, the breath of pine and dogwood and dewy lilac, and across the last consciousness will flash slim Gothic spires against a carnival evening sky.

(The next article in this series will be "The University of California.")



IT is an unsatisfactory world. Wine turns into vinegar, innocent babies grow up into politicians, pretty girls become wrinkled women, and love turns into marriage.



A MAN courts trouble when he lives beyond his means. A woman, beyond her depth.



Spring Fire

By Margery Williams

I

I CAN'T quite bring myself to agree with Saxton. And yet, walking home that night—the snow white and dazzling underfoot, the air filled with that strange exaltation and wonder of frost, just such a night as that other, fifteen years ago—I almost doubted.

Was he right? How much did any of us really know of Beatrice, after all? . . . Perhaps it was that one didn't trouble about her, at the time; it is only now that little sharp impressions of her come back: her silences, that odd disconcerting gaze, caught across the room at moments when one wasn't thinking of her, the little trick with her hair that fidgeted her mother so unendurably; her way of sitting huddled up, as though her body were something that didn't matter, that just happened to be there, her real self caught up somewhere, walking apart, like that other Beatrice. Her shyness, the sort of shyness that is just awkward and young and inarticulate, difficult to have patience with, and then at moments that almost startling directness of speech, an amazing candor and clear-sightedness; most of all perhaps, to me certainly, the funny little gurgle, deep and unexpected, that came into her voice when she was eager or excited, not quite a stammer, but the way a thrush's notes tumble out. . . .

When I wonder about Mark Harrell, that little ripple in Beatrice's voice comes back so vividly. What was it he said, in that last thing of his? "Warm-thrilled with joy of undreamed passion." Could anyone have written that and not be thinking of Beatrice?

And then her death, swift and incred-

ible, like the drawing of a sword.

Pitiful . . . no. That is the last word to use. Splendid, terrible, inexorable; a fate that leaped on her from the dark, on that exultant night of stars and frost and mystery, dragging her down, too swift for agony, into the black water under the ice. "With glad feet on death's threshold. . . ." I wish I didn't always come back to Harrell. One could as soon call Greek tragedy pitiful. Pity implies somewhere a failure, and there was no failure in Beatrice.

There might have been, if she had lived. That little volume of verses, treasured so sacredly by the family, published after her death. They would have been better not published. For they give us nothing of Beatrice herself. Any imaginative girl of her age, religiously emotional, might have written them. I don't attach the importance to them that Saxton does, even as indications. They just express the usual vague yearnings of adolescence, tinged with that mysticism the church so fosters, *clichés*; unfulfilled desire, divine union, the heavenly bridegroom. She used to creep down into the chapel at night and kneel there—no, I don't see her kneeling; crouched up, more likely, chin on hands, watching that dim red light flickering over polished brass and smooth wood surfaces. What *did* she think of? Saxton, I know, interprets those poems, one or two of them, rather literally. There is more, he maintains, of the Song of Solomon than of Tennyson's "Saint Agnes' Eve."

No one else saw it; certainly not the nuns, who wrote that sentimental, but quite sincere, preface to the volume. They rather harped on the "Saint

Agnes' Eve" ideal—"the starry floor, the heavens opened wide. . . ." One can't blame them. To their imagination it would inevitably present itself that way. The whole thing was religiously dramatic, given their point of view; out there with her group of girl companions, singing carols from house to house in the snow; that sudden decision to go home, to the home she never reached; that tragic finding of her body under the canal bridge next morning, two days before Christmas. One almost sees the frosty heavens opened, that "young spirit drawn upward, a pure flame burning with heavenly love. . . ."

One can't read that preface and not feel that they meant it, that Beatrice, to them, was just that. Certainly they loved her, and one can understand how that love helped to create the legend, beautiful, tender, mystic, that will always cling about her in their minds. The pure flame. . . .

Saxton, too, used that expression.

"There was something flame-like about her," he said. And he stopped his pacing of the floor. "Did you ever notice that child's eyes—did you ever really *see* them?"

II

SAXTON must have been thirty when Beatrice died. Was he, I wonder sometimes, the other, that third man he sometimes vaguely refers to?

"There were two," he said, "not counting Harrell. Godfrey was in love with her. It was Godfrey, you remember, who heard the singing. He was engaged to Beatrice's sister, and I *think*—I think there must have been something. I rather believe he found himself in love with Beatrice when she came home that time. He hadn't really seen her, in a way, before. She was just a child, and then she changed so amazingly, blossomed, in those few weeks.

"You know how a change like that can suddenly come about? That wonderful intense vitality, a sort of coming to life. Disturbing, too. Godfrey must have felt it. And she would have been

quite unguarded with him . . . of course she never thought of him in that way at all, never guessed. For one thing, her whole emotional being was too much taken up. But she made a confidant of him, in a way. They weren't quite fair to her at home. Godfrey felt that himself; he told me, after. You know she had that queer, naïve way of making friendships; she was always more at her ease with men than with women. I suppose she felt their sympathy; her real self came out in little intimate glimpses, aspects of her that one didn't suspect.

"There was trouble between Godfrey and her sister about that time, a sort of estrangement. I don't even know that it had anything to do with Beatrice, not admittedly, at all events. Perhaps it was just the beginning of a feeling that they weren't, after all, suited. But they hadn't spoken for some days; Godfrey gave up going to the house. The whole thing must have begun to worry him, to weigh very much on his mind. And it was while he was lying half-awake that night, in the sort of state when things run through your brain—troubling things, and yet you're not awake enough to grasp them consciously—that he heard the singing.

"He was quite positive he heard it. Mixed with a dream at first, he thought, lying there drowsily; then with a sort of shock he realized that it was actually there, outside somewhere, on the road. Just a wonderful, joyous song, he described it; unearthly, but that the interpretation his half-roused senses gave to it—you know how carol singing will sound at night? But it wasn't a carol, not that sort of carol. Joyous, that's what he insisted on most—something joyous and splendid, full of life. . . . And he heard no footsteps, though it must have been under his window.

"You know, he had rooms in a house on that side-street, running down to the canal. It remained like a wonder in his mind; he didn't even associate it with Beatrice at first, next morning, when they came and told him. They carried her up to the doctor's house, on the cor-

ner; it was the nearest, and Godfrey lodged only two doors from that, and so it was to Godfrey that Beatrice's sister came first, blind and shaken, forgetting their quarrel. And then, as I say, he didn't remember that singing, not till some time after; then it came back to him in a sort of flash.

"I want you to *understand* Beatrice. I know that built-up picture of her. It's beautiful, lovely, anything you like. I grant you all that. And it's how most people will always think of her. But it isn't her. She wasn't just that. She was something warmer, more human, incomparably finer; full of fire and imagination and that intense, fatal gift of idealization. I think she really had the vision that a few very noble souls do have at rare moments, the vision that transfigures. It would be a very wonderful thing if one could, for an instant, see the world as Beatrice saw it, as she saw people, as she must have seen Harrell. And behind it too you must remember, there was that strain of paganism. Did you ever know her grandfather, old Thornaby? It was in him strongly, and it came out in Beatrice.

"She idealized Harrell, of course. Never for one instant, I suppose, did she see him as he was. The whole thing began in a sort of hero-worship. She used to keep clippings about him, I know, hidden away; a portrait cut from a magazine the time he came back from that South Seas expedition. She knew all about that divorce case; she even spoke of it once to me in the astonishingly frank way she had sometimes, before the time when she left off speaking about him at all. Heaven knows how many imaginary encounters she must have rehearsed, long before she ever met him; how she gradually came to the point where she felt that she alone really could understand and appreciate him. Actual dreams, too, perhaps. . . .

"And then Harrell came to live there, quite near them.

"He took that Colonial house, the old Lafferty place, a little outside the village. It had a rather beautiful garden, old box-hedges and a rosary, and a big

herb-garden shut in with yew-trees. Beatrice always had a great fancy for that garden.

"It seems that when the place stood empty the old gardener and caretaker, who stayed on in Harrell's time, used to let her go up and spend as much time as she liked there. Mooning about, her sister called it. She made friends with the old man; he liked to see her about while he was working. She used to take him tobacco sometimes. And then she must have met Harrell there, one time when he came down to look at the house. Just a chance meeting, but they would have talked, certainly; spoken of the garden, because it was either at that first meeting or later that Harrell told her he wouldn't be using the garden; she was to come and go as she chose.

"That I know, for she told me herself, and she went up there quite often, later, when Harrell was living there. Old Michael, the gardener, knew of it, but no one else, and Michael, it seems, never spoke. He was devoted to Beatrice in a queer dog-like way. One can picture him pottering about there with his wheelbarrow, clipping a hedge . . . muttering to himself, perhaps; a sort of dumb chorus. It seems incredible that he shouldn't have gossiped, should just have gone about day after day like a snail on his affairs, blind to everything about him. I've often wondered how much he really did know.

"And then September came, and she went back to school; it was her last year there. It must have been a queer term she passed; walking on air, caught up in that interior life she lived so intensely, till the real life, I suppose, seemed detached and strange to her, a sort of part she played. Her only real moments those she spent at night, alone, creeping downstairs to sit there in the chapel organ-loft, thinking.

"I don't know if she wrote to Harrell; probably she didn't. There would have been no need. She was just dealing as well as she could with what had come to her, trying to face things, to understand. Can you realize the amazing ground she covered, in those few weeks,

the change that took place in her, like the secret growth of a seed overnight, bridging the space between the child of that summer, awkward, inarticulate, held by a thousand inhibitions and self-ignorances, and the wonderful, momentarily free being she became; single-minded, swift-moving, sure of herself. There was never, to my mind, anything so wonderful, so complete. I have said that Godfrey realized the change in her at once; it was a thing one felt. 'It was as if I had never really seen her before,' he said.

III

"You will say," continued Saxton, "that an intensity of relationship like that, between a man and a woman, cannot grow up suddenly, develop out of nothing. For there had been nothing—up till then. But it can; it did. It is just the one eternal miracle left to us; the one thing we cannot pick to pieces and analyze, say that it happened thus and thus. Godfrey was only a spectator, caught into it momentarily, but it reacted even upon him. He was rather overwhelmed by her, disturbed.

"A new Beatrice, suddenly alive, intensely desirable, quite indifferent to the effect she produced, for how could she be conscious of him? He didn't even exist for her, except as a person to whom she might in emergency turn, whose sympathy she could be sure of. Intuition taught her that. She had no need to explain to him. She ignored even his relation to Monica, her sister; his position in the household. It was as though she just looked round and thought: 'Yes, Godfrey. I can count on him.'

"You see, we have a gap just there, and only Godfrey's impressions to go on. He wasn't altogether in the confidence of the family, at that moment. Perhaps they suspected him, on their side.

"Something had happened, certainly, between the time Beatrice went back to school and the third day of her vacation, the day Godfrey came upon her there in the hall. It couldn't have been old

Michael; he would never have betrayed Beatrice. A well-meaning neighbor, perhaps. Something had come to her mother's ears. Rather vague—she certainly never guessed at a beginning of the truth, poor woman—but just sufficiently definite, given the things she had already heard of Harrell's reputation, to set her up in arms.

"A good woman, but totally unimaginative. One can suppose the line she would take. There was a scene, certainly. How much of her secret Beatrice succeeded in defending, with that new self-protective wisdom, suddenly alert, to aid her; how much, in her supreme recklessness and indifference to catastrophe, she may have let fall, we can only conjecture. But it was enough to account for that sight Godfrey had of her, tense, highly-strung, past self-consciousness.

"It was a shock to Godfrey. He had been so under the spell of her, those two days, of the new, amazing warmth and aliveness that he felt in her, her gaiety. Very white, and her eyes that had been crying, and the handkerchief, white with a little green border, that fixed itself so absurdly in his mind through the way she kept folding and unfolding and straightening it out, corner to corner, while they talked. There was no beating about the bush; she took everything absolutely for granted. She didn't even explain; she paid him that tribute, unconscious though it was. 'You—you're awfully decent. No, there isn't anything. It's all right.' And then suddenly, facing him, those eyes that said, 'Very well then. You can do it or leave it. But I can count on you. You can take a note for me to Mark Harrell. That's all. Give it to him yourself.'

"It was his first intimation. And not a question passed. They simply looked at each other. 'All right, Bea. I'll do it!' And he went. Something heroic in him, setting off blindly like that.

"Imagine her having that effect upon Godfrey! Up till then she only existed for him vaguely. Monica's young sister; a queer sort of kid. And then this

sudden realization of her, like finding something very beautiful and losing it in the same flash, for that was how he felt. He hated Harrell. He hated the whole business; he didn't even want to know about it. But he went up to the house, wondering, all along that frost-bound road, what he would say, whether he would say anything.

"Harrell was away. He was sailing for Spain at the end of the week. He might come home first; it was uncertain. There were no instructions.

"Godfrey found his chance to give the letter back to her, later, risking his welcome at the house; for it was just the beginning of that trouble between Monica and himself; nothing defined as yet, but there was a constraint, and the atmosphere that evening helped to crystallize it. When he left it was with the understanding quite clear, on both sides, that although nothing had been said, that he was not going back for some time, and he didn't; he never saw Beatrice alive again. And so his last impression of her, the thing that was to remain with him, was that moment between the lighted room and the closing of the hall door, when she followed him out and stood there, not speaking—that glimpse that was like a gift to him of her real self, something precious and wonderful.

"That . . . and the singing.

IV

"I DON'T know after all," Saxton went on, "that one need feel sorry for Godfrey. He did, in that short space of time, come nearer to realizing her than anyone else, even Harrell. To all she left some gift, some part of herself, and what she left to Godfrey was close and intimate and human.

"One understands Godfrey, but Harrell isn't so easy. He was an artist to begin with, and one feels that the artist in him was always uppermost, always the conscious element. He must have known quite early; he couldn't have been blind to the force he roused. I think myself that he did realize it, that his sudden decision to go away was

either prudence or cowardice, whichever name you choose to give to that compromise which comfortable-minded people call 'doing the right thing.' And if you want to judge Harrell by conventional standards you must give him that credit. I don't. To me it was just an inconsistency. But I do know that his feeling for Beatrice was very real and intense, perhaps the most intense thing in his life. It was the nearest he ever came to real emotion, but he was cursed even there by the artist in him that was always outside, always a spectator, calculating the effect. He couldn't get away from it. And in that sense I say that Godfrey was really nearer to her.

"Do you remember that Christmas? There was a period of very severe frost, that dry, arid, bitter cold that keeps everything at a high nervous tension. And then the snow. It snowed for two days, and with the snow the temperature rose and the tension was broken. It was a physical relief. Just the whiteness and sweep of it. Beatrice always loved snow. She said once that it set something free in her.

"There was to be carol-singing that year. They were going out, the whole group of them, Monica and Beatrice and some other ten or twelve of the young set, singing from house to house. It was planned for the night before Christmas Eve; they were going to end up at a friend's house with dancing, and the two girls were to sleep the night there.

"Up to the last moment Beatrice had hung back; she had a headache, she didn't think she would go with them. And then suddenly she changed her mind. She put on a new frock, a little evening thing of rose silk; she must have run upstairs and changed into it very quickly, while they were all talking in the hall.

"When she came down she had her fur coat over it, buttoned to the throat, but it was that frock, missing from its peg in the closet, that made her mother so certain she had intended to stay for the dance; or why should she have dressed so carefully that night, down to the little satin slippers thrust into her

coat pocket, to be drawn out next day, all sodden and water-stained—those slippers so tragic in their suggestion of dancing feet . . . but they had danced to the stars, those feet, and many waters could not wash away the joy that was in them.

"'Fey' was what they said of her that evening. They all felt it. I think they were even a little afraid of her, those young people, and they couldn't put into words just what they did feel. Happiness . . . that was what they all so insisted upon. 'She seemed so happy.' But the way they said it made one feel that it was something more than that, something they didn't quite understand themselves; remote from them, even while they reacted to it, were caught by the spell. Afterward they must have wondered. . . .

"Perhaps they all had the snow a little in their blood, a sort of intoxication. And the noiseless scampering from house to house, the singing . . . the suddenly opened doors, lights and laughter and greetings flung across the still air. She kept it up to the very last, to that moment, so well calculated, when she turned to the two girl friends who had waited behind for her—Monica and the others were already ahead up the road, and the rest, who for some reason were not going on to the dance, had turned back; there was a lot of nonsense and confusion over the bidding good night, and no one, it appeared after, had been quite clear with which party Beatrice was going. She broke away from the homegoing group and ran back, the easiest thing in the world, though she must have risked all on just that chance. 'You weren't waiting for me? Why, I'm not coming on after all. I thought I told you. I'll catch the others up and walk home with them.'

"You can see her there so clearly, stopping to wave her hand again before the turn of the road hid her from their sight.

"I want you to realize, just for a

moment . . . to see her as I do, listening till the last broken echo of their voices had died away, stillness all round her—that strange exaltation born of the snow itself, the sense of freedom and space, stars above and the mystic whiteness underfoot, a new heaven and a new earth. The consciousness of desire set free, all things made possible. A moment more wonderful, had she known it, than any that could come after.

"Yes, that was her real moment. The rest—what was it—her flight through the snow, secret, fleet-spiced, the remembered turn of the road. There would have been a light, perhaps, in a lower window, for Harrell was there in the house, we know. He had returned that afternoon and would have been packing most likely, that very moment, for his journey. And then the second's pause, the wide-flung door. . . .

"That other picture—you can't make me believe that was Beatrice. The heavens opened for her, that night, but she passed through singing, exultant, her head flung back, and never were the gods more supremely wise in their gift. For they gave her in that one white hour life and the fulfillment of life and its swift, glad passing; the draining of the cup, the burning-out of the flame.

* * *

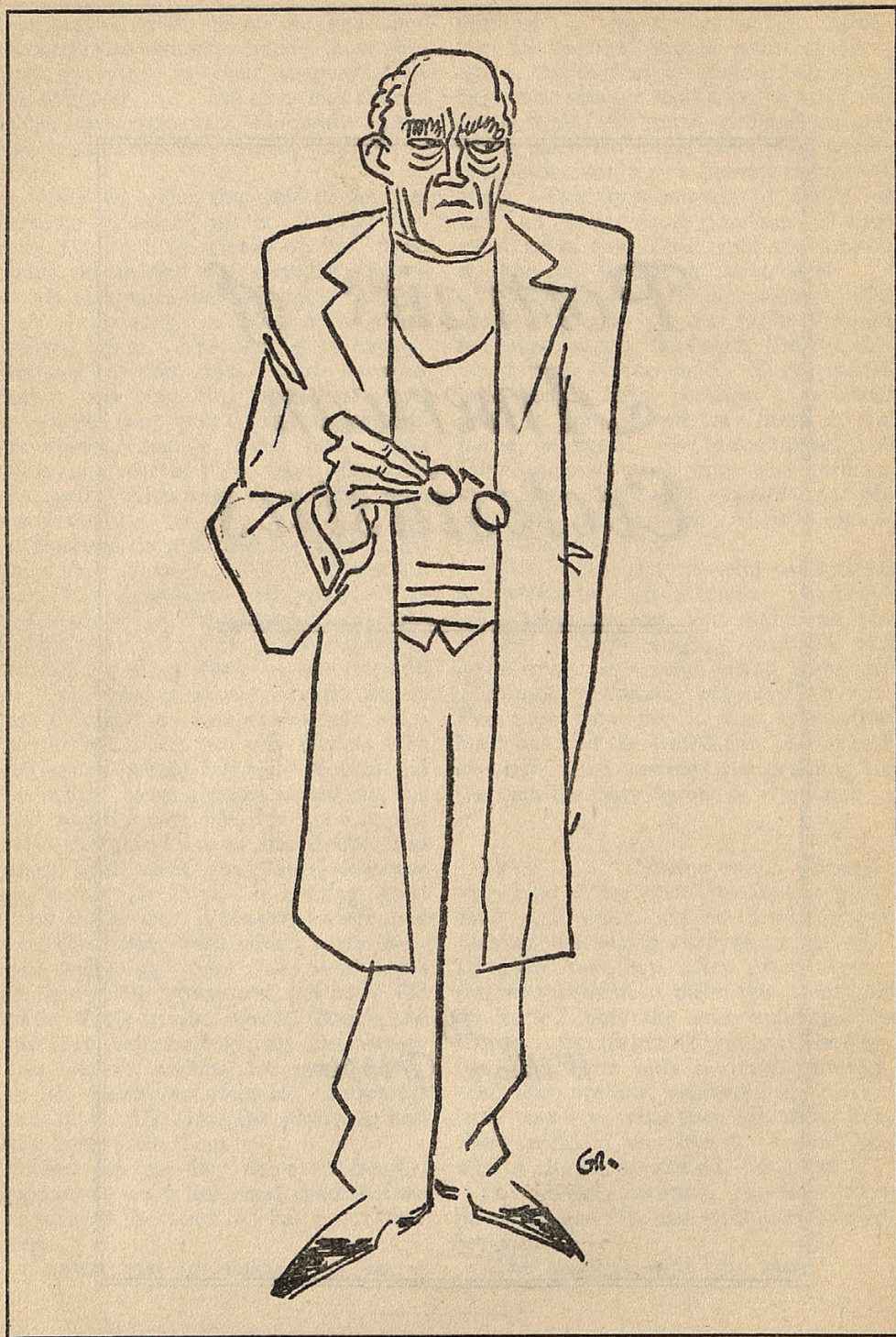
"Yes . . ." Saxton said. "That is my vision of her, the thing that lives for me. And can't you see how, having that, all the rest is nothing to me—this so-called discovery, after fifteen years, the republication of those few poems, all of herself that she ever expressed in words. Significant, if you have the key, but they were only a foreshadowing. And that preface, reprinted too . . . well, that was what they felt about her, *their* vision, if you like it. I don't see why it should be altered, for them."

He leaned forward, touching into flame the fire that had smouldered down between us.

"The supreme gift," he said.

*Portraits of
American
Ecclesiastics*

*By
William Gropper*



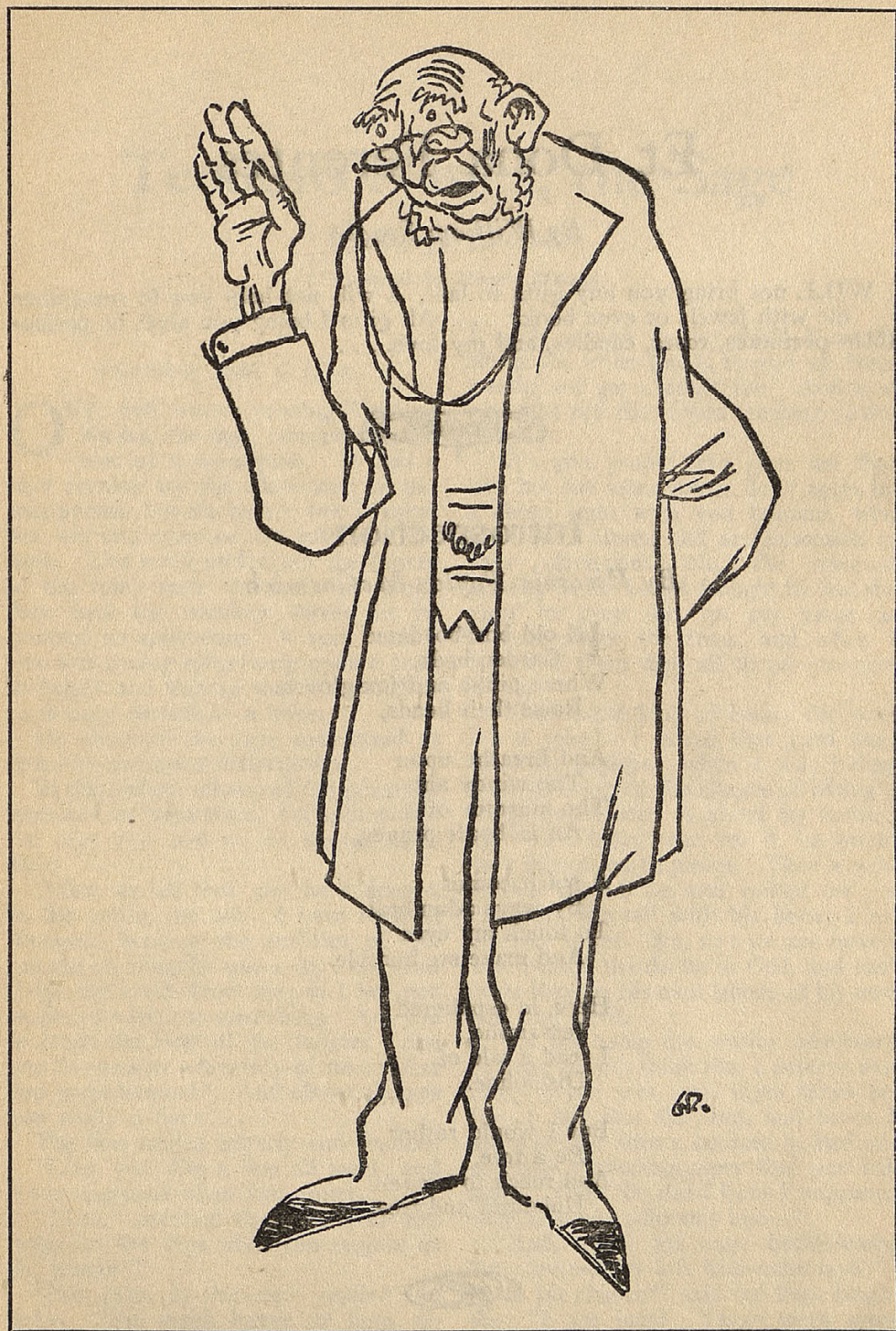
I. The Rev. Basil Smythe, A.M., of St. George's, in partibus infidelium



II. Dr. Vincent I. Gallstone, of Temple Beth-Mazuma



III. The Rev. Hercules Williams, D.D., of Bethesda, A.M.E. Tabernacle



IV. The Rev. Isaiah Wesley, D.D., of Antioch Baptist Church,

Et Dona Ferentes

By William Seagle

I WILL not bring you any gifts to last. I will not help you to remember me with jewels or even books. . . . All gifts I bring you shall be perishable—perfumes, roses, candies, and my love. . . .



Introspection

By Virginia Taylor McCormick

I N old box-bordered
Garden beds,
Where pinks and fox-gloves
Raise their heads,

And breathe upon
The windy air
The murmur of
An inchoate prayer,

A spirit comes
By ways adumbral
To touch my eyes
And make me humble.

Here, in espaliered
Jessamine,
I read a tale of
Discipline.

But I would rather
Be a tree,
And reach to heaven
Unbound and free.



Teodoro Nasica, the Sage

By Luigi Lucatelli

(Translated by Morris Bishop)

I

Interview with a Lion

ONE dull winter evening Teodoro Nasica, the sage, strayed into the tent of a menagerie. It was a bare evening for the showman; no one was present but the beasts, few in number, old and more or less bald, and the sage. The wind puffed out the canvas of the tent, made the kerosene lamps flare and the monkey shiver as he gnawed an apple-core. A very ancient lion was gazing reflectively upon a bone so bright and shining that it seemed to have been turned on a lathe.

He observed the sage and stared at him with profound melancholy.

In the perfect silence of the place the sage had an inspiration. He approached the cage and said to the savage monster:

"Lion, by all that you hold dearest in the world, aid me. I have need of illusions, because the realities of life rob me of, roughly, one a day; mankind strips my ideals from me; so I beg you to give me faith in something. Are you in truth the king of the jungle? Are you the worthy adversary of man? Are you great-hearted? And above all, are you really a lion?"

The lion smiled bitterly and replied:

"Lion, yes; I'm a lion all right; and I was captured when full-grown."

"Then," pursued the sage, "do you weep for the days when you reigned in the jungle?"

"Not even in dreams," replied the beast. "I'm much better off here, although the meals are poor; further, if

I could return to the wilds I would advise the other beasts to give up freelancing and get a steady job. And now who told you that I was the king of the jungle?"

"It's you people who gave me that title but the other beasts don't agree by a damn sight with you humans, who were born slaves and are homesick in your slave-pens. No, the meanest monkey in the forest thought he had the right to drop dirt on my mane as I went under the trees, and when I roared at them they all threw coconuts at me.

"There's the king of beasts for you! It's a joke! I heard that yarn once from an explorer, when I was hiding near his camp on the chance of lifting a sheep, and I tried to assert my authority. If I hadn't run for it, he would have blown me to pieces. Then a wild buffalo chased me and spiked me not far from the tail with his horn; I remember it yet. No, no; we are merely wild beasts, thanks be to God, and each of us lives by his own labors, at his own risk and peril.

"As for being the worthy adversary of man, I don't think that I deserve that title. I ran into man three times before I fell into the trap, and twice I made myself scarce, because he had one of those exploding pipes that you call guns. Then the third time I happened on a little boy who was lost—"

"And," said the sage breathlessly, "you generously left him unharmed!"

"A fat chance!" said the lion, laughing; "I ate him! There were some scraps left, and as the dog loves man so

dearly, a dog came along and finished him."

"Then I should say you are a great deal of a scoundrel."

"You took the words out of my mouth! But I would give a good *filet mignon* to know why you men persist in bestowing on us so many virtues and so many vices all the deficit of your own moral balance. You're a fine lot of easy marks! Sometimes, when the boss tells the public about my exploits, I can't help laughing. And to think that all I've got to do is to roar a bit, so that I won't get beaten!"

"If you only knew how they fool you in this place! See that wolf? He's a dog. See that parrot? Half his feathers are hand-colored. See that pelican, that noble creature who, according to you, rends his breast to feed his young? They had to take his wife out of his cage to keep him from eating her eggs!"

"Take my word for it, and I'm an old beast and I've seen a lot, it isn't worth the trouble to be the king of these beasts, for they have only one virtue—they are able to take care of themselves. Good-bye!"

The sage walked away sadly; near the door he paused to look at the elephant. The colossal figure was so stern and monumental that it inspired a certain feeling of reverence. "Here!" thought the sage. "This creature at least is surely the austere living essence of Power!"

The elephant raised his trunk and whined:

"Please, Mister, give me a peanut!"

II

Gratitude

TEODORO NASICA, the sage, while turning over some old letters, happened on a note that had come to him the previous year. It included the following words: "Today and forever, near or far, I will remember the kindness you did me. It was the noblest action I have ever witnessed in my life, and my gratitude will be ardent and everlasting."

The little story returned to his mind. A poor fellow-lodger in a moment of desperation had robbed his employer of a hundred lire and was headed directly for jail. The sage had offered him the money as a gift; he could still feel upon his hands the man's hot tears of gratitude. And the sage also had wept with emotion like a tender-hearted veal.

But when he had read the letter he became thoughtful and somber. He dusted off his hat, descended the stairs and went directly to the shop of the grateful beneficiary.

The man was alone, working on his accounts.

"Listen to me," said the sage, gravely; "I have come, my dear friend, to ask you a favor. It is this: Forget me. When I think of your gratitude, it frightens me. It is said that the virtue of gratitude is a specialty of the negro race, possibly because some individuals of that species are likewise accustomed to eat their benefactors. Do not delude yourself about your feelings, because in reality you hate me. Love is that state of the emotions in which the image of a person is welcome and arouses pleasure. If you have the idea fixed in your mind that you owe me something, you will end by hating even the color of my clothes.

"Whoever wrote that a good deed never dies was a pessimist and he was right; it is so difficult, unfortunately, to pardon our benefactors. So I beg of you to forget me. If you are a good man, when and if you have a chance to do me a good turn, you will do it in response to the promptings of your own nature; and if you are a bad man there is no use lying. This unsettled item in our accounts distresses me, and certainly it distresses you too; so let us cancel it. There are certain moods and feelings that most men cannot experience without their turning acid in the body as wine turns acid in badly-corked bottles. To say 'I am grateful' is like saying 'I am virtuous'; the virtue is soon nullified by one's own complacency in possessing virtue, and in the end one treats it as

children do their dolls, by breaking it open to see how it is made.

"Gratitude has a real element of affection only when the good deed is continuous. Look at the dog, for the dog is Man incomplete—luckily for him. The dog, it is said, is capable of dying on his master's grave. This noble deed illustrates the same phenomenon of imbecility as the fly pounding its head for an hour against a window an inch thick and thinking, 'I'll get through if I try long enough'. Obviously this hypothetical dog imagines that his master is going to come out of the grave some day with a large supply of bones, preferably his own.

"What is more, cut off your dog's food and he will cut off his gratitude. For my part, every time that my Fido licks my hand, I suspect that he is tasting me.

"So, my friend, I repeat to you for the last time, and as firmly as possible; Forget me, forget me!"

"All right," said the other; "the only thing is, who are you?"

III

The Moment of Stupidity

TEODORO NASICA, the sage, closed the *Divina Commedia*, fixed his gaze upon the bust of Dante upon his desk, and exclaimed with a regretful sigh, "*Pape Satan, Pape Satan aleppe!*"* Who knows what marvelous thought is hidden from us, perhaps forever, in that mysterious line!"

He stood suddenly aghast; for he saw an ironical smile contracting the lips of the august poet.

"What, isn't it true?" he asked, in trepidation.

"Fool!" replied the great Florentine.

"You may be right," admitted the sage modestly.

"No offense, no offense," continued the Master. "You men, and I too, before I was reduced to existence as a

book, a memory, and a few monuments, I too was sometimes a fool. Nay, do not start! Man is so inflated with pride that he refuses to see things as they are, but instead he sees them according to certain artificial models which he makes for himself. When he says 'Power' or 'Genius' he pictures them not as they exist in man, but as man would paint them in a colored chromo. Yes, I was a great poet—but not all the time. Sometimes I yawned, sometimes I read over my verses and they made me sick, sometimes I was tired of thinking, and tired of living in the same room with the blinding light of Truth. From Truth I finally caught a mortal fever, and then, after hanging up one masterpiece after another, I slipped, and permitted some verses to limp and stammer in the midst of the luminous chapters of my work. But you people always want to make rules. If a singer has a splendid voice, you say, 'What a beautiful tone!' even when he sneezes.

"As soon as a man rises above your level, you forget that he has passions, callouses, weaknesses, an intestine which digests prosaically and a nose which must be blown exactly like all the other noses in the world.

"If you only knew how we laugh at you, here in the other world! Several hundred savants have racked their brains to find out why Marc Antony fled at Actium. He told me why; because he was afraid, physically, basely afraid like a Papal soldier. It didn't last long, but it was real while it lasted. And there are thousands of cases like it. If you knew how often the divine melancholy of a verse is born from a decaying tooth!

"Besides, Genius has no continuity; it is the apogee of an exceptional psychical state, even in an exceptional individual.

"When I wrote that line I felt like kicking the table to pieces, and I wrote it with the same feeling that makes me laugh in your face at this moment, with the mad desire to sing at this drugged and doleful world forever in search of a

*Dante's forever inexplicable line.

master, like a discharged servant. Do you understand?"

"Yes," replied the sage, and woke up.

He had been dreaming. Dante had not really spoken, and what he had taken for the voice of the divine poet was only the squeaking of a mouse, devouring a book of philosophy. But the mouse also was right.

IV

The Benefactor

TEODORO NASICA, the philosopher (or indeed sage, as he liked to be called), was returning from a meeting of the Association of Charities for the Blind. It naturally followed that when he passed a blind beggar he had the impulse to stop and speak to the man.

He was a creature to whom Distress had given an aspect of singular squalor; he was a rag dressed in rags. Something in the shadows wherein he passed his days suffused his whole being in shadow. His lips mumbled sacred words, either in prayer or blasphemy. His whole body was anguished and forlorn, an incarnate whine.

His hands, clutching an iron bowl, reached forth to receive the obol of Teodoro.

"I thank you, my benefactor!" murmured the blind man.

"No," replied the sage; "you are the benefactor."

The blind man jumped as if he had been called Your Excellency. He opened his left eye; one would have sworn that he saw with it.

"Why?" he muttered.

"Because you exercise in the field of charity the beneficent function of the rural banking system; you make loans at minimum interest. Our moral balance is most favorable, due to you, and your salutary influence hinders us from being charitable, which would be an immense annoyance."

The blind man sneezed.

"*Salute*," said the sage. "Now see, if I had been obliged to profit by the instruction I have received today, I would

have had to admit on my way home that I am a wretched individual. To alleviate misfortune is terribly hard work. Compassion, that emotion which impelled me to shower upon you a good five centesimi, is only the first stage of Charity, and we dodge the rest of that noble disease and banish it entirely by the systematic practice of almsgiving. The other stages of Charity would be toilsome and exhausting; we would have to enter into the hearts of our fellow-men, which would be as nauseous as to make an inventory of our own consciences; we would also have to study the remedies for evil. This orthopedic surgery of destiny is called True Charity. But instead I give you a penny and keep within all the rules."

The blind man underwent another slight convulsion; he opened his right eye, and you would have sworn that he saw with that eye also.

"Besides," continued the sage, "by this modest disbursement I make my moral accounts balance. It makes no difference if I obtain this result by putting under 'credit' an item which in the audit would be worth little; that is done in business every day. And in my odd moments I can bask in the profound satisfaction of being a man of heart. As you see, I am an intelligent man, whereas you perhaps said to yourself, when you received my penny, 'Another fool!' Tell me the truth, didn't you think so?"

"Yes," said the blind man.

"And what made you think so?"

"Your face."

V

Remorse

TEODORO NASICA, the sage, every morning took his *café au lait* at the same table in the same café; at the next table to the right a large individual dedicated himself every morning to the same ritual.

For this reason they bowed in greeting daily, and once Teodoro gave the gentleman a match. One morning the sage, on entering, found his breakfast

acquaintance in a most pitiable state; his beard was full of bread-crumbs and his eyes full of tears, a heart-rending spectacle in the case of a large and imposing man.

The sage's bosom was filled with compassion; he asked:

"What is the matter?"

"Remorse!" replied the other. A tear fell in his beard.

"That is wrong"; said the sage mildly; "Remorse is useless."

The other stared at him, with that envious expression we assume when we look at great criminals.

"Let me explain; consider the question from the social point of view. Nearly all of us fall into the error of appraising our actions according to a unit of measure which we find within us, that is, by comparing our actions to an absolute Good or an absolute Ill which do not exist in Nature. This Absolute does not occur even in the realm of inanimate matter; if one wishes to use gold, silver or copper for practical purposes, one must mix with them another metal nobler or baser.

"In actual life, every true gentleman contains a certain proportion of the scoundrel, and every scoundrel has his portion of the upright gentleman. Furthermore, we give the names *honesty* or *dishonesty* to certain prerogatives of the spirit which render us more or less useful to others and therefore more or less *social*.

"You are pursued by remorse, which is a sign that you have been a scoundrel. It indicates—please pardon my frankness—that you have an excessive quota of scoundrelism, an element which exists in me as well. But you have repented, and you wish to turn to the path of honesty; bravo! these noble impulses do you honor. But as for Remorse, have none of it.

"Have none of it for three reasons: First, because it is a painful emotion;

second, because it is useless; third, because it will lead you to be more of a scoundrel than before.

"A painful emotion is clearly undesirable; pain is not even poetic. Is typhus poetic? pneumonia? the itch? No; and if your soul is in pain, neither is your soul poetic.

"Second, Remorse is useless, because it is, in itself, only a symptom. When the organism is outraged, it reacts by means of fever, and the fever may be a good sign. Similarly, the soul reacts by means of pain. The essential thing is that you have repented, and the pain is only the outward manifestation of your repentance,—come, come, I saw you! Wipe away that tear that glistens like a drop of dew on the nostril of a hippopotamus!

"Third, Remorse is harmful. You must try to become an upright man without boring your friends to death, for otherwise, in the great consolation of feeling that your soul has repented of evil, you will pardon yourself and regain completely your self-esteem without having earned it. So act! And dry your tears!"

"But how?" whimpered the colossus.

"Let us see; what did you do? Did you rob a man?"

"Worse."

"Dear me, dear me. . . . Did you seduce a woman?"

"I am a vegetarian."

"Did you assault someone?"

"I am a Tolstoyan."

"Did you deceive a friend?"

"I haven't any."

"Then what in Heaven's name did you do?"

"I saw a man's wallet fall on the sidewalk, and—"

"And you took it! But that can be quickly remedied!"

"Worse!" sobbed that remorseful man; "I gave it back!"

The tears rained down his cheeks.



The Superman

By Victor Thaddeus

I

THE great savant lay upon his deathbed, his hands crossed on his breast, his eyes closed.

For more than a quarter of a century his name had been a household word throughout the civilized globe. Children assumed it proudly when at play, distinguished scientists referred to it reverently in laboratories, lecture halls, and within the precincts of faculty clubs. His marvelous inventions had wrought miraculous changes in industry, and had humbled nature; while his mathematical treatises were of a profundity to stagger the human intellect. It was quite early in life that he had consecrated himself to the task of revising human knowledge. Gathering unto himself philosophies and religions he had assimilated the good and rejected the bad. Philology he had traced to its life-root, and the sound of his voice proclaiming the brotherhood of man had brought peace and happiness to many simple hearts. By the proletariat he was worshipped as semi-divine, and long ago the wise men of the world had realized that here was, in the flesh, the first Superman.

There existed no field into which his restless mind had not taken him, or where in but a short space of time he had not outstripped his forerunners and confreres. He became the very rock of thought, and it seemed to many that the most obscure secrets of the universe were not hidden from that piercing eye. Yet, greatly as he had achieved in all the sciences and economies, and greatly as he had benefited, and was still benefiting, mankind, nevertheless the world,

in a strange way, awaited his death impatiently; for, in frequent interviews granted at his unpretentious dwelling in the country, the great savant had stated that his mind would not be capable of its grandest and most sublime effort until that moment arrived when it was about to be released from the burden of its corporality.

"At the moment of death," said the great man, simply but confidently, "I shall reveal to man the greatest of all truths. All that I have done for the human race, the darkness that I may have dispersed, the confused thought that I may have arranged in a more orderly manner, the superstitions that I have dissolved, and the faiths that I have propounded, will be as nothing compared with the awful significance of that truth of which I shall be the instantaneous medium."

The large, lustrous eye swelled, and the voice confounded his audience by its prophetic import:

"That truth, my friends, will be my real life's work! You may tell this to the world, and you may tell the world also that, for this reason, I who love life shall be glad when the hour arrives that I lie upon the couch of death, for then, and not until then, shall I become the Superman."

This interview, when first published, was received with incredulity. It was believed that the interviewers had exaggerated some chance remark of the great thinker. But the news was confirmed in subsequent interviews, until it was understood that this idea had become the dominant one in the savant's thoughts.

Then, as invention followed inven-

tion, and one important epoch-making work flowed after another from the man's prolific brain, and still he remained firm in his belief that these were but trivial harbingers of the sweeping inspiration that would be granted to him upon his deathbed, the world became intensely expectant. Certainly, as the years went by, and the great savant ripened to a rich old age, so did his productivity increase enormously. His intellect, far from retrograding, was keener at seventy than it had been at thirty; and it was evident that he had not yet attained to the zenith of his illustrious career. There were people who were thoroughly convinced that he was jesting with the human race, as he had discovered the secret of perpetual life, and would never die; and many greybeards visited his modest establishment, hoping that he would impart the secret to them.

II

BUT the day came when the great savant was confined to his bed, and it was known that he had but a month to live. Since his death was a matter of international importance the First Executive of the country went into conference with his wife and children and, with their permission, the aged man was transferred, using the utmost caution, from his modest country dwelling to the most palatial of governmental bed-chambers, having the dimensions of a small hall, and the richest appointments. The savant was unconscious when the transfer was effected, but on recovering his senses he quite approved of what had been done. He saw the First Executive looking down at him.

"Now that the time is drawing near when we are about to lose our greatest citizen," said the First Executive, "it is but fitting that the great men of all nations should sit here and listen to your last words, which you have so often alluded to as the crowning achievement of your distinguished career."

The great savant's eye wandered around the beautiful chamber.

"I would have preferred to die amid more modest surroundings," he said simply. "But from childhood my life has been dedicated to the service of humanity, and it is possible that the sight of so many learned faces may inspire me to more complete expression of the truth that I am convinced will descend upon me in the supreme moment of disintegration."

The First Executive beckoned to his companions to stand back.

"There is no doubt in your mind—?" he suggested.

The great savant smiled pityingly.

"I have never doubted. I have achieved. I shall achieve."

And the First Executive tiptoed from the room, abashed, to set international wires busy again. He was determined to do this thing right, so that future generations could not cast obloquy upon his memory for having failed to do appropriate honor to this great citizen who on his deathbed had divulged to the world its greatest truth. He extended invitations to the celebrities of the world to be present at the death of the illustrious savant; their expenses to be borne by his government. And from all corners of the globe, north, south, east and west, from the orient and the occident, from institutions of learning, academies and palaces, the intelligentsia hastened to respond to his call.

Nor was it the intelligentsia alone. With the wise men came monarchs and the ambassadors of monarchs, and the richest men of all races, for the death of the great savant, now that it was fully realized, as imminent, had assumed the proportions of some terrific natural event with which was concomitant incalculable benefit. One hundred and fifty people could be admitted to the chamber. To be numbered among this chosen audience was deemed an inestimable privilege, and for this privilege there was the most strenuous contesting. The morning came when the great savant was expected to die.

He lay on his deathbed, his hands crossed on his breast, and his eyes closed.

His wife and two sons sat beside him.

The chamber was packed and silent. Every seat was occupied, while a file of the less fortunate extended from the chamber door through the long corridors to the vast concourse waiting patiently outside on the square for the savant's dying words to be transmitted to them by the official, standing, megaphone at his side, upon the balcony.

Never, perhaps, in the history of the world, had there been assembled in one small chamber so illustrious a congregation. Never, certainly, had any body of people sat together in such complete humility and eagerness of spirit. Notebook in hand, monarchs and scientists awaited the moment when, with their own hands, they might commit the immortal words to paper, while philosophers and prelates, forgetful of their own differences in the solemnity of the moment, whispered of the mighty soul who was about to depart this life in their presence.

The great savant stirred. With his hand he motioned feebly to his son. The son bent over him. Then the great savant closed his eyes again.

"He says to have patience a little while," said the son, "He feels that the moment of inspiration is drawing close."

Over those many faces, profound-eyed, broad-browed, and wrinkled with thought, it seemed that a light played as he spoke. The features flashed into restless animation, the eyes cast quick glances, the lips moved. There was a rustling of garments, and the cardinal, emissary of His Eminence, who had been unable to attend in person, was heard to mutter an audible prayer. The official on the balcony picked up his megaphone, and the sound of many people moving on the square entered the chamber and mingled with the subdued noises of pages turning and pencils being prepared.

Suddenly the aged savant's hand was

noticed to twitch violently. Again he opened his eyes, and again his son bent to gather his words. Then the aged savant closed his eyes again.

"He says to have patience a little while," said the son, "For the truth is entering into him."

Now the chamber had become tense, and every man sat rigid, his pulse beating furiously, and his eyes fixed upon the bed. The bell on the square rang out the noon hour, and the cardinal glanced quickly at his neighbor, a distinguished Chinese mathematician who had been rushed halfway across the earth that he might be present at the savant's deathbed. Certainly the hour was auspicious. But the suspense was terrific. The moment had really come. The Superman was really dying. The world truth was about to be revealed. Great beads of perspiration stood upon the Hindu philosopher's brown brow. Complete silence reigned.

Then a sigh of agonized expectation rose from the chamber as the great and aged savant was observed to slowly raise himself into a sitting position.

He sat there, with arms outstretched to all those learned, eager countenances, his face radiant. There was not a man in that audience who beheld him that did not know this was indeed a Superman. His body trembled as though this truth he was about to utter, which would consummate his existence and achievements, bubbled within him. His lustrous eyes swept from face to face. His lips parted.

The official on the balcony raised his hand for absolute silence.

Then the Superman's voice rang through the chamber.

"One and one—"

"One and one—I!" bawled the official on the balcony.

"—are three!"

"—are three!"

And the Superman fell back dead.



Music

By Eleanor Ramos and W. Adolphe Roberts

I

A PERSISTENT banjo, tinkling like plebeian laughter through the uproar of a jazz band, halted me in front of "The Painted Goose." Behind the darkened windows of the converted store, I could see shadowy figures of dancers. The piano was rattling lustily, and the saxophone yodled with obscene insinuation; but it was the merry banjo that lured me in. Although a critic of music, I have always liked to hear a colored gentleman play the banjo. I knew a colored gentleman was playing this particular banjo.

A sign was dangling over the door—a piece of board rudely carved in the profile of a bird, and painted a raw blue. Across the creature's side was lettered in red, "The Painted Goose."

I entered directly from the street and found myself in a square room lighted by hanging lamps, which threw a strong mauve glow through the dyed chiffon in which they were swathed. In grotesque defiance of harmony, the chairs and tables corresponded in hue with the signboard, and a blue candle in an iron stick was set on each table. The ceiling was adorned with Cupids and Venuses of the bar-room school. There was a tiny dancing floor, and a jazz band composed of three hard-looking white youths and a negro banjo player.

Being as sensitive to life as the Indians were to nature, I immediately became suspicious of my surroundings, without knowing the motive for my suspicions. After a few minutes, however, I realized that the place was masquerading among its neighbors. It was equivocal and suggested subtly the ex-

istence of a proprietor who knew a great deal about mixing drinks, no matter how poor his taste in interior decoration might be. Then I saw a square-faced man with badly cut hair, leaning unostentatiously against the entrance to a back room.

"Of course! The old-time conductor of some East Side dance hall," I told myself, pleased at the confirmation of my instinct.

A waitress who looked like a Botticelli Venus came toward me, threading her smiling way through the dancers, and swaying slightly to the music—a fox-trot from the Follies. It struck me that the ragged music enhanced her charm. And this is always true. The most beautiful woman benefits by a musical setting, and no woman can be ugly draped in a Ravel waltz.

I ordered coffee and pastry. When the girl had brought the order to me, I leaned back in my angular chair and studied the clientele.

I perceived that it was as contradictory as the decorative scheme. It could be divided into two classes. The majority were the sort of people one sees in cabarets uptown and downtown, and all over the world—commonplace people in a happy mood, trying to be more happy. But scattered through the room were representatives of a very different type: men too well dressed, with voices so low and colorless that one was vaguely repelled; girls of peculiar immobility of expression, and with odd tricks of slightly twisting their smooth, red mouths and glancing from under artificially whitened lids.

At the table next to me sat a party of these pseudo-smart ones. A coarse

note ran through the low, wary talk of the girls. As soon as they guessed I was listening, their voices changed, the pronunciation becoming clipped and fastidious, somewhat after the manner of a saleswoman in an expensive shop or a chorus girl you have just met.

I reached the obvious conclusion that, since prohibition, the establishment had moved from another quite different neighborhood, and that some of its old patrons had followed it.

On the opposite side of the dance floor, two carelessly dressed fellows, with hard faces and the cold eyes of men dangerous in a low physical way, slouched in their seats. I was watching their contemptuous treatment of the little French cakes and delicately tinted drinks, when I saw their mouths loosen and the color leave their faces. I followed their frightened eyes. Two other men, a shade more disreputable in appearance than they, were sidling from the door toward my table, which was the only one at which there were vacant seats.

The newcomers sat beside me. One of them was bigger, somewhat older, more shabby, than the other—and he was blind. The lids drooped over his blank eyes; but his face was noncommittal, without the pathetic look of childhood that sightlessness often gives. The waitress came for their orders.

The blind man had upon her the same effect he had had on the two fellows across the floor. She stopped at the sight of him, her features under good control, but her breast rising sharply under the tight satin blouse she wore. Sauntering nearer, she gave one long, impenetrable look at the younger man. Suddenly, with an indescribable air of mingled pity and apprehension, she laid her hand over that of the blind man. He allowed his hand to remain under hers for several seconds and then smiled quietly, as if he recognized her.

Walking with a curious sliding motion, the two cold-eyed men I had noticed before crossed to our table, one shaking hands awkwardly with the blind man, and the other whispering a

few words. The blind man recognized them also, and his younger companion met their brief questioning glances with a shrug of his shoulders and a gloomy stare, as if he were disclaiming all responsibility for a dangerous situation. Then, without a word of farewell, the cold-eyed pair slipped away and out of the place, walking almost reverently, like mourners paying their last respects to the dead body of a friend.

The party at the next table seemed undecided whether to follow the disappearing men. I surmised that the situation was not entirely clear to them, but that the women's sharp, whitened noses scented danger. While their escorts smoothed their hair nervously and slewed their eyes about, the women whispered furtively. Finally, the party made its exit, with stagey nonchalance.

II

I LOOKED closely at the blind man whose mere presence had been able to create so profound an effect on his friends, as well as on several persons who apparently did not know him very well. He was a large, vaguely lined, white-faced man, of perhaps thirty-five. Only his hands had definite character: they were beautiful. As the strength of some girls is concentrated in their luxuriant hair, so were all the delicate and human qualities of the blind man expressed in his hands. Besides being physically beautiful, they seemed to possess a spiritual individuality, quite unrelated to the rest of his body. They gave me the idea of orchids, growing from a great dark tree, but getting their nourishment mysteriously from the air.

His companion was smaller, slenderer, and very alert, with eyes that shifted rapidly, like a ferret's. He wore a soft collar, and one suspected that his coat hid a dubious shirt.

Both the men were naturally swarthy, and might have been brothers; but the blind one's face had an unwholesome pallor, as if he had suffered a long illness. When alone with his companion, he spoke:

"D'yuh think I could get to the piano now?" His voice was low-toned, uneven.

The younger man was staring at the door and did not reply.

"Harry, won't yuh help a guy to the piano?"

The other kept sullenly silent.

"I gotta play that piano, I tell yuh," urged the blind man, without desperation, but with a terrible insistency.

Still there was no answer. Had the room become unnaturally quiet, I wondered, or did the earnestness of the speaker make other sounds appear trivial?

Out of the smoke-clouded atmosphere came a small, neat figure, quite effeminate, yet hard-faced, with smoothly brushed hair and a caricature of a tie at his throat. He bent over the blind man and spoke in a very low voice, scarcely moving his lips, but with a kind of forced cheerfulness:

"My band. Some band, all right! You're Fred from the old place, ain't you? Un'erstan' yuh wanna play. All right, go ahead. Give yuh a hand?"

The blind man stood up and put his hand on the other's elbow. Then he turned to where his companion was still sitting.

"Does the mother know I came over here?" he asked. Again I had the sensation that several people were eagerly listening to his words.

"I didn't tell her nothing—but she knows," answered the sullen one shortly.

There was another silence, during which the jazz leader waited patiently. Three more guests flitted out of the place. Suddenly the blind man smiled, a wise, an extraordinarily charming smile.

"And now, kid, gimme the gun," he said with heavy playfulness.

The young man rose, with words of protest on his lips. But Fred's hand dropped on his shoulder with the kindly authority of an elder brother.

"I request you to give me the gun."

He pronounced the verb solemnly, saying it with unaccustomed tongue, and this clothed his simple utterance with an

effect of seriousness, as if spoken by dying lips.

With a quick glance about the room, the young man made a sudden, lightning-like movement, and it would have required an eye sharper than mine to detect what he did. But I knew that he no longer had a pistol in his pocket. A second later I suspected that neither of them had it, because the Botticelli-waitress had moved over with a careless glide and brushed against the blind man.

Together they crossed the dance floor—the neat little jazz leader and the taller, awkward figure, with its bullet head and drooping eyelids. Not stopping to regulate the piano stool, Fred seated himself. The saxophone, banjo and snare-drum began to make sounds at once reminiscent of an American circus caliope and darkest Africa—something terribly American. One could hear whistles blowing; bells clanged unexpectedly; sudden jarring sounds smote the ear like the operation of emergency brakes on the Twentieth Century Limited; and under all, the barbaric tom-tom.

The blind man at the piano listened for a few bars and then swung into a fanciful piano accompaniment. Dancers flowed onto the narrow floor, and it seemed to me that the musician deliberately tried to lead them into grotesque new dance steps, as if he were a blind Piper of Hamelin. I had an amusing impression, perhaps not without its interpretive value, that each smooth dancer's head was a vegetable, that only the bodies were vital.

The dance was longer than usual, almost twenty minutes. When it was over, the blind man remained hunched over the keys. I hoped he would play, for his variations had interested me, in spite of their extreme "ragginess." Then, without a preliminary chord, he began a queer, broken waltz, ornamented so extremely as at first to obscure the melody.

At last I got it, and I marveled I had been so slow; it was as insistent as a red question mark on a black and white page. And that, precisely, was behind

his waltz—a red question mark. I am sure if I had asked a child what the piano was doing, it would have replied: "Asking a question," and if I had asked it the color of the question, the answer would have been, "Red!"

I have listened to much impressionistic music, but I have never received so direct an impression. Debussy has luminosity, of course, and Ravel and Ornstein and Stravinsky make us see the glint of metals; but in the syncopated chords of this waltz I could feel red as distinctly as if I had seen it splashed over the white keys.

Don't think I am comparing my blind player with the modernists. There was no soul to his music; only something that annoyed, prodded, as an ugly wall paper. Yet it was real enough, exuberantly new. It had a sort of pseudo-soul; decidedly it had a meaning, and an original one. The color was raw, you see, like a life without traditions, but the reverse of naïve.

He paused to light a cigarette and then began a fox-trot, the cigarette hanging from his mouth. He played it as beautifully and delicately as Paderewski plays his minuet, and it was quite as fine in its way. The sudden, furious runs, the unexpected, vibrant pauses, and the very slight, sophisticated melody of the thing belonged to a city of subways and skyscrapers as authentically as Mozart's minuet belongs to a scented court. I couldn't imagine how it would sound in Carnegie Hall, but I would have liked to listen to it in the Grand Central maze as I followed the green line.

"Is it from the Cohan show?" I heard someone question, and then a couple began to dance. Several others followed. I rose, also, and made my way to the piano. I watched the fingers, now bunched together and scurrying over the keyboard like white mice, and again stretched to their limit in their creation of *appoggiatura*.

When he had finished he turned his head about curiously, seeming to feel me there.

"Have you published it yet?" I asked.

"Do you think it's good enough?" He spoke diffidently.

"There's no doubt about it," I replied.

He caught the impatience in my voice and answered me with childlike apology:

"Well, yuh see, I've never written it down; don't know one note from the other. I've just thought of it for—for a good while."

There were scattered hand-claps for more music; probably they wanted the jazz band. He remained at the piano, however, and smiled up at me rather merrily.

"I'm gonna stay right here till I'm thrown out," he announced, striking a chord with lingering fingers. "This piano and me is old friends. I come tonight just so's I could tickle the old keys."

"What things do you play—how long have you studied?" I asked at random, to keep the conversation going.

"I've never heard nothin' much but dance music," he answered. "I've been blind since I was a kid, but I always remember in the kindergarten when the teacher usta show us the colors—red, blue, yellor, green, orange, vi'let—y' unnerstan'. I ain't forgot them, and they kinda seem to make music in my head."

He stopped and rubbed his forehead. "Now, that waltz, I call it 'The Red Waltz.' Is that a good name?"

"Very good. But you don't confine yourself to colors?"

"Oh, no! The fox-trot I just played is what I think New York is like, hearing it as I gotta, instead of seeing it," he went on, encouraged. "An' I done a dandy one-step that kinda puts all my feelings into one piece. There's colors in it—green, blue and vi'let parts—a guy notices them, I guess, when he's full of pep."

As I listened to his one-step, I remembered a morning in April when I was leaving a party which had lasted all night. As I breathed the unpolluted air of the new morning, I felt younger than ever before in my life. His music reminded me of the slowly flushing sky I had seen, and of the clean, sharply

contrasting colors of the buildings and advertising signs, which in a few hours would fade into a dingy background for the grubby morning business crowd. But behind all this color remembrance, I recalled most intensely my false feeling of strength and my momentary, almost insane, self-confidence. I waited anxiously for his ending. Would it provide an explicit answer to anything?

The waitress came to me. Her face looked like a paper flower after a rain-storm. She whispered in my ear:

"Try to get him out, for God's sake, before they come!"

She stopped abruptly and I followed her eyes. Three policemen were standing, with drawn revolvers, in the doorway. In a second they were upon the blind man, who had not ceased to play, and the one-step ended with a stuttering discord. Handcuffs clicked. With unnecessary roughness, the policemen searched their prisoner for a weapon, and then pushed him to the door. No one touched his hand in farewell as he was taken away. His swarthy young companion was being frisked by a sergeant and the waitress had disappeared.

III

I READ in the next morning's paper that he was called Blind Freddie Roche and that he had escaped from Sing Sing, where he had been doing a forty-year term for burglary with violence. Be-

cause of his sensitive musician's fingers, he had been an expert at opening safes and had had no compunction about cracking heads. But the reporter could not understand why he had gone with his brother, immediately on his arrival in New York, to a cabaret managed by people who had formerly run a place on the East Side where Blind Freddie sometimes played the piano. The journalist made a variety of comments on the dare-deviltry of the act, but appeared to have no inkling of the lust that had driven Fred to seek an instrument he knew, a familiar audience.

Next to the news item I had been reading were the musical and theatrical advertisements. I glanced at them thoughtfully. A new opera by an American. I had heard it: it was worse than nothing—a sickly mixture of English comic opera and Italian bombast, toned down by native gentility. An all-American programme at Carnegie Hall. I visioned it: Wordsworthian poems by MacDowell and good-Indian songs, played by scornful Latins and Teutons. And one who could have expressed us truly was in jail! He would have made a sensation at the all-American concert. Perhaps it was fortunate he was where he would never perform, and that he could not put down in black and white his unerring feeling for the modern American life.

Yes, he expressed us too well: a spectrum shimmering endlessly on a concrete sidewalk.



MATRIMONIAL happiness is the brief period between buying the furniture and selling it.



THE strongest instinct in man is the acquisitive. In woman, the inquisitive.



For Muted Strings

By Thomas Beer

(Author of "The Fair Rewards")

I

IT is well to lament the passage of a noble nature from this world. In 1852 an argument flowered into a fight among the passengers of the Ohio River steamboat *Rosaline* and seven corpses made its period. The seventh corpse was that of Eleutherion Joe Gish, the aggressor in this matter. He deserves to be remembered as much for the dynamic symmetry of his name as for the motive leading him to slaughter six men with a crowbar. He did all this while defending from criticism the temporal power of the Pope.

Often in our nation's past have risen men, mostly nameless, who did and dared on behalf of a sect. In 1846 the soldiers herding Mormondom from Nauvoo, in Illinois, affably let some twenty old Saints and children drown in the wintry river that edged the town. In 1832, representatives of the New Lights interrupted a camp-meeting vehemently and with fence-rails near Steubenville, Ohio, so that blood flowed and four babies were still-born who might have grown up to be Methodists. Are not these facts a part of our tradition? And is all respect for tradition dead? "Shall not," as Roscoe Conkling said, "the youth of our future lean on the breast of such a radiant history and thence sustain his soul?" Or has "the music of memory's harp swooned into silence on a dying strain," as Charles Sprague put it?

The fault lies with our fiction, which is the sole source of American thought.

Twenty-five years ago, all novels were historical novels. It was hard to read at all without some information seeping into the least retentive brain. Veterans of the Civil War wrote stories of home life under Pontius Pilate and their unsought daughters evoked Robert Lee and Martha Danbridge Custis-Washington. Religion figured. The French sixteenth century was a preserve. Protestant widows went gunning for Marie and Catherine De Medicis. Every school girl had a list of Henri Quatre's frailer friends pasted beside the photograph of her room-mate's brother. It was monthly proved that the Pilgrim fathers were good men who raised large families and that Virginians were gallant. I recall a tale, "The House of De Mailly," in which an American and Christian virgin stood off the Dark Powers of Louis Quinze, the Church of Rome and the deer nursery maintained by the former with the consent of the latter. It was splendid. Then it blew up, out and over. Some dastard perverted the course of fiction to the present and no modern child could possibly tell you who Andrew Jackson was. Or Charles Major.

There was an interregnum and then, in 1915, it was promised me from the high citadel of the cerebro-radicals that "our new fiction, our new criticism have come to grips with all features of American life," and I credulously waited for the boom of cannon aimed at the national vagaries in religion. But nothing has happened to speak of and I confess an annoyance with the world cleansers, the life renewers. In "Main

Street" one reads that a preacher in Minnesota wept for the sins of Utah. Among the whirling colors and ecstasies of "Rahab" is visible an episode of a reformed rowdy who cast off his wife on Christian grounds, she having allayed the pains of his absence with a little love. Octave Thanet told the same tale in 1890, not badly. Scattered through the magazines one encounters babyish legends of adulterous pastors and vestrymen who gamble in wheat—gambits used long ago by Nathaniel Hawthorne, Mark Twain and George Horace Lorimer, conservative writers. I am informed that Thorstein Veblen has arraigned the fashionable sects, somewhere in his revelations. There has been some general sniffing at Puritans. And that is all.

Now comes another cry from the citadel: "As for the crude beliefs and repressions of evangelical religion, they have long since faded from the interest and grasp of educated men." Which seems to mean that the cannoneers have thought better of the bombardment. It must mean that or it means nothing. On the same day one sees in the press that five elders have seriously decided against cigarettes as a specific sin under the teachings of Christ and that an evangelist nicknamed The Texas Tornado is drawing swarms to Calvary Baptist Church in New York City. On the radical pandect cited, it appears that these things elude the interest of educated men. Why so?

Meanwhile, in the underbrush and marshes of the land, there is a pretty constant yapping among the pious. One hears of societies in the midlands which are designed to chivy Roman Catholic office-holders. Thomas Watson, the Luther of the South, is periodically busy in some such shabby endeavor. Reviewers are heaved off eminent dailies for squibbing the style of Mary Eddy and the head of Christopher Morley was demanded last Christmas when he stated his unbelief in the Immaculate Conception. An archbishop suppresses a meeting in favor of telling every woman what she knows and the only satirist who spears the prelate is Franklin Adams, a columnist.

II

PRECISELY, then, the cerebrals have funk'd a job. The harrying of the psalm singers has been left to the light armed, the wags and the frivolous. The Brouns and Adamses and Marquises are the heroes on the side of the Children of Light. A hedonist has still his curiosities. I should like to know why the great guns hang in the rear. Partly, of course, on account of the dazing sentimentalism which makes an American radical agnostic burst into tears before the spectacle of midday mass in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart on Montmartre when he would flay a Baptist meeting in Ohio, assembled for much the same reason in a building but little more ugly.

It is the decoration that makes the average critic dumb. A lad in blue overalls weeping on the edge of a revival jamboree in Alabama is a misguided ninny, tortured by fears of everlasting fire. A Breton in a blue smock, weeping in the gloom of a chapel at—let's say—Pornic is something sanctioned by Art. The uniform motive is forgotten. The basic foulness of the two shows doesn't count as identical. "God!" someone says in a dialogue of De Gourmont, "how ugly religions are!" Having subscribed to the mode in quotations, let me sink back on a forgotten native statement: "There is something treacherous and disgusting, to my mind, in religious teachings based on fear of punishment after death. It makes a man of any intelligence shrink from what is now called Christianity." Thus Horace Greeley in a public print of 1850.

Beyond the emotional willingness of American critics lies a candid fear of consequences. Now, the consequences of an assault on religious fustian in this country would be practically nothing. Greeley and Ingersoll lived in a blaze of popularity. Ingersoll made money, even, out of his chatter. Jack London's agnosticism never hurt him with the crowd. Anyone who invaded the South with a lecture defending Satan would become rich in a fortnight. "Hell," I am told by Georgia's leading æsthete,

Walter C. Byrd, "is awful damn sacred down our way and we're a lot interested in it."

There is the slimmest chance of such a lecturer being shot. Legions of bored young men would encircle him. He might die of delirium tremens. For a person who could endure the pleasures of modern Southern food, the game would be great fun. Let religious controversy be revived as a sport. I insist that the danger of bloodshed is small. We lack, today, the virile temper of Eleutherion Joe Gish. The worst that would befall a rationalist lecturer in the South would be exclusion from the country clubs which are mostly controlled by Pharisaic manufacturers of sweet drinks and by orthodox Israelites.

We need a "Main Street" of the American churches. It has been clumsily attempted in a sincere but dull novel of Winston Churchill. There has been no successor to "The Damnation of Theron Ware." I have heard of nothing so joyously arranged for the right performer as was the Methodist Centennial, two years since, in which wastrels from Greenwich Village managed sideshows, through which William Jennings Bryan was carried on a camel while frenetic matrons chanted "Onward Christian Soldiers" and the police of Columbus noted the increased number of streetwalkers. The thing yells for a devoted and patient satirist. He might, with advantage, be a Christian.

A simple experiment in fiction would show any waverer how necessary some such styptic is. Let the satirist offer to any American magazine a tale containing the sentence, "Father Murphy, the priest, was a stupid bore," or, "the Episcopal church at Smithville was principally attended by social climbers who put up with its tedium for the sake of invitations" and see what happens. I once, by accident, included two phrases of Pierre Loti's little threnody on the fading saints from "Matelot" (a book which had a huge sale in an American

translation) but the phrases had vanished when the yarn was printed next to an English story which boldly stated that its hero and heroine were agnostics, lived and loved agnostically and weren't smitten by God with strange diseases.

So far as an amateur in slumming can trace the process of the editorial invertebrate's mind, this injury was done the poor integrity of my tale on the ground that the American reader would be shocked by the suggestion of an American writer's interest in a subject so obscene as skepticism. Somewhat later, the same magazine requested me to remove a schoolboys' denial of hell from another tale on the grounds that "the public misunderstands such things." The story was printed without a word suppressed in a five-cent weekly of prodigious circulation and the public survived the jolt admirably although I was denounced by an Episcopal rector from his pulpit in the Middle West and received a few tart letters from women. One matron informed me that it was impossible to raise a family without hell. She was a Seventh Day Adventist. Well, Harry Leon Wilson set down in his forgotten novel "The Spenders" that "Hell is most reluctantly resigned by those who don't intend to go there."

The truth is that a vast public waits for the man who will turn either satire or sentimental invective loose on the thing manufactured, in this country, from Paul's fugue on the words of Christ. Perhaps a sentimentalist would be the better choice for the task. He must speak to children tormented in shadows and adolescents driven frantic by the lies of fools. It is vain to say that these myths of punishment have vanished from the public mind when they so plainly and so stoutly endure. Without much belief in the curative power of letters, one may still be indignant with a critical world which has shirked the essential in its advertised fight for a solid civilization. But the learned sit in silence, and silence makes men cowards.

The Biggest Fiction Story of the Year

By Hartley H. Hepler

THE clock on the dresser indicated seven twenty-five as Throckmorton awoke. His features radiated satisfaction as he realized that he was just in time to shut off the alarm which was set for seven thirty, and so permit his wife to slumber on undisturbed.

Although it was bitterly cold, he threw back the coverlets at once and rose briskly, tip-toeing to the window and closing it gently. His wife always begged to be allowed to rise first and close the window, but he would never permit her to do it.

As he started toward the bathroom, Mrs. Throckmorton opened her eyes and regarded him affectionately.

"You need not shave this morning, dear," she said. "You really do not need it."

Throckmorton laughed as he turned the faucet and found there was no hot water.

"Oh well!" he replied, "I'll shave anyway. I love to do it."

Having finished shaving, he cleaned his safety razor carefully and restored it to its case. His wife would have been glad to clean it for him, but he enjoyed doing it, and always reserved the pleasure for himself.

As Mrs. Throckmorton changed from her flannel night-gown and began to remove her hair from its curlers, her husband looked at her admiringly.

"You always look so well in the mornings, dear," he said sincerely.

Breakfast was a merry meal. The grape-fruit was innocent of seeds and

showed no tendency to squirt, the coffee was piping hot, and the toast the exact shade of brown that Throckmorton liked. He opened his soft boiled eggs dexterously and without soiling his fingers.

"Go on and read your paper, Anstruther," urged his wife, noticing that he was politely refraining from glancing at the *Times* beside his plate.

"If you are sure that you don't mind," he replied.

He glanced at his watch and observed that he had ample time in which to catch his car to the office.

"I enjoy these editorials a great deal," he remarked. "They are excellent."

Before leaving he lingered in the hall, and clasping his wife in his arms, he kissed her fervently.

"Good-bye, sweetheart," he whispered, "Do you realize that tomorrow we will have been married fifteen years?"

She laughed merrily.

"Well, well," she said, "I had entirely forgotten it."

As Throckmorton reached the corner, he observed his car approaching and, boarding it, he took one of the numerous vacant seats, the motorman having accommodately waited until he had seated himself, before starting.

As he entered his office, he found the force all at work and noted with approval the pile of letters on his stenographer's desk, indicating that she had been busy for at least an hour.

As lunch time approached, he took his telephone from the hook.

"Give me Lemon 4444," he said.

The connection was instantaneously made, and a cheerful voice greeted him.

"This is Wilkinson," it said. "Sure I'll go to lunch with you. I'll run by in my car at twelve."

The clock in the jeweler's window showed exactly twelve o'clock as Wilkinson drove up to the curb.

"How do you like this car?" inquired Throckmorton, as they crept into the traffic.

"Rotten," replied his friend. "Worst I ever drove. About five miles to the gallon, a set of tires every two thousand miles, and won't do over thirty-five miles an hour to save its life."

As they rolled through the park filled with children enjoying the sunshine, Throckmorton turned to his companion.

"How is your little boy?" he asked. "I never hear you say anything about him."

"Didn't I tell you what he said to me last week?" inquired Wilkinson. "We were sitting on the lawn when the moon rose, and Bobbie turned to me and said:

"Daddy, is the moon the star's muvver?"

"What do you think of that for a three-year-old? Isn't it awful? I'm sadly afraid he is going to turn out to be weak-minded."

They had an excellent lunch at one of the large hotels. The check was two dollars, and the waiter brought Throckmorton's change in the form of three one-dollar bills instead of the usual small silver, and hurried away before either of them could produce a tip.

"There is nothing much to do at the office this afternoon," said Throckmorton as they left the hotel. "Suppose we go to a vaudeville show."

They enjoyed the performance greatly. The jokes were new and clever, and there was no reference to prohibition or Flatbush.

As they left the theatre, a man approached them smiling.

"Hello, Throckmorton," he said, "I've been waiting here for you. Saw you go into the show, and I want to pay you

the ten I borrowed from you last week."

"That's all right," said Throckmorton with unmistakable sincerity, "I am in no hurry for it."

"No," said the other, passing him a bill, "I insist."

Wilkinson suggested a run out to the country club and a few holes of golf, but Throckmorton declined and requested his friend to drop him at his home.

Mrs. Throckmorton, who had spent the afternoon sewing buttons on his shirts and looking after his hosiery, greeted him affectionately.

"Dinner will be ready as soon as you are," she said. "So hurry."

As Throckmorton seated himself at the table, the maid entered with the soup.

"I thought it was Nora's night off," he remarked.

"It is," said his wife, "but she said she would rather stay here and wash the dishes so that I needn't bother."

After dinner, when the two children had, in spite of their parents' protests, gone quietly to bed, their father spoke.

"Shall we go to the Howartons' reception?" he asked.

"Let's not," said his wife. "This month's bills came in today, and I'd rather stay home with you and look them over."

"Just the thing," was the enthusiastic response. "Our bills are always so reasonable that I'll enjoy writing out checks tonight to pay them."

After disposing of the bills, Mrs. Throckmorton read several chapters from Wells' "Outline of History," her husband listening attentively.

"There is only one thing that has marred this day for me," said Throckmorton, as they prepared to retire, "and that is, I found no bills for millinery for you this month. You must buy several new hats tomorrow without fail."

But his wife shook her head decidedly as she began to take the pins from her hair.

"You forget," she said, "that I bought one not more than six months ago."

Dry as Dust

By Lynn Montross

I

OLD GABLER lived his life at the State University in the ever-dashed and ever-renewed hope that one of the thirty or forty juniors who took his course in Russian Literature each semester would learn to read. One of them had four years ago; but none before or since.

Up in his room, a marvelous room in which towering shelves of books rose to the ceiling on every side but the one in which the table and bed were located, he quietly gloated in anticipation of the moment that would bring to him that student. Some tall, awkward girl, maybe, whose pale eyes would burn at the message of the page and who would grope for more.

Then would old Gabler, very quietly and unobtrusively—so quietly and unobtrusively, lest he rudely quench the flame with too much fuel—blow upon that spark.

Let's see. There would be first (after the Russians, of course) Stendhal. Ah, "The Red and the Black"! And then, yes, some verse: Baudelaire, Villon, Blake. Then Gautier and Balzac and Flaubert and . . . and these were just a start. Just a start.

That student of four years ago! Old Gabler would rub his pudgy hands almost sensually at the mere thought of the progress made by Arnot—no, not Arnot; it was Zeitland, to be sure. Turgenev's "Sportsman's Sketches" had first won him over, quite by surprise. And then how Zeitland had taken to Dostoevsky! Dostoevsky was still almost his favorite. Then Checkov. Zeit-

land sent back letters now and had ever since his graduation.

Old Gabler hardly dared admit his hope even to himself. But he believed that he had another prospect easily as promising as Zeitland had at first been; the most definite prospect of three semesters in the person of that tall, thin, homely Miss—yes, Miss Schultz. The one that always came in early and sat each day in the same corner seat. It was just the other morning that she had stopped at his desk on the way out and talked to him about Pushkin. She had asked where she could obtain more of Pushkin's things. Think of it! Asking for reading outside the classroom, extra reading!

The rest of the students of his class were—er—quite likable young people, to be certain—but utterly hopeless from old Gabler's standpoint. Their work in the course consisted in the reading each week of one Russian novel, play, book of short stories or poems, and the reporting upon it to him verbally or in a quiz. Old Gabler knew their answers by heart. These answers varied so little from year to year:

Checkov was good, but his stories ended in such queer places.

Dostoevsky was good, but he was so morbid.

Turgenev was good, but there was so little that happened in his novels.

Andreyev was good, but he did write about such horrible subjects.

Tolstoy was good, but really wasn't "Anna Karenina" too long for such a small amount of plot and action?

From the viewpoint of his students, Professor Gabler must have seemed a

queer, pompous, didactic sort of old man. His stiff, upstanding gray hair; his protruding, beetle eyes of brown; his pink, wrinkled forehead; his timid smile and the absent way in which he rattled the keys in his pocket—he was unforgettably out of place anywhere except in that marvelous room in which the towering shelves of books reached to the ceiling on every side but one.

Those who took his course advised other juniors that it was soft, but dry as dust. "All you got to do is read a book every week, but they sure are dry books. Anyhow, you can skip lots of it because he's pretty easy on you in the quizzes. Old Gabler's not such a bad sort, at that."

II

To old Gabler, as he hurried across the campus that morning with an armful of books, the day must have seemed epochal. To the thirty-four students in his classroom on the third floor of University Hall, it was merely one of the mornings upon which the professor might by good luck be late enough to allow the class to escape him. Three watches were already out, for it was a written or unwritten rule at the State University that the class was privileged to leave in a body if the instructor was ten or more minutes late.

But at eight and one-half minutes after the bell, with seven watches now in sight, old Gabler opened the door, to be greeted by a salvo of mock applause. His beetle eyes opened even wider and he smiled his nervous smile. He seemed so defenseless in comparison with such instructors as Dean Fannicott that he had been the object each year of mock applause, epidemics of forced coughing, shuffling of feet and the like.

His gait was nervously mechanical as he went from the door to his desk at the front of the room. He placed his shapeless felt hat on a pile of books that littered the desk and rummaged with quick, birdlike motions in one of the crammed drawers. He finally produced a handful of cards and began calling the roll.

"Abbott."

"Here."

"Miss Baker."

"Here."

"Miss Emory."

"Here."

"Grafton."

"Here—ah!"

The last "here" with astounding emphasis. A few titters audible, chiefly at the almost childish surprise in old Gabler's protruding eyes, just as if the incident were not a daily occurrence.

"Miss Homan."

"Here." Very languidly.

And so on down the list. Nonchalantly the thirty-four answered their thrice-weekly roll-call without once suspecting what an anxious day it was for old Gabler. The youths in narrow collars and tiny neckties, the youths with hair brushed straight back from the neatest of parts, the thirty-four of them seated in front of old Gabler in the rows of scratched, iron-armed chairs.

The recitation began. A youth with bored, sarcastic eyes took a final gulping look at his notes, shoved the text-book to one side somewhat ostentatiously and reported his reading of a volume of Chekov's short stories. There was no doubt but that he had read them. He made that point obvious by carefully outlining the plots in advance.

They were, he would say as his criticism of them, very good. Yes, very well done. Chekov was often called one of the greatest masters of the technique of the short story. But it seemed to him that at least one or two of them might have been a little bit better if there had been—well, more to them. That is, one or two of them, anyway, that he had particularly in mind in reference to this point. Now, in that story "Grisha," as an example, the end came so suddenly and unexpectedly as to leave kind of a vague impression in the reader's mind. The names in all these stories were a little queer, of course, being Russian, and that made it a little difficult to follow them. But the stories were, as a whole, he would say, extremely good.

The class appeared to be fully as bored as the speaker. Some of them were following with their pens the grooves in the iron arms of the desks. Two or three others who were to report that day were reading their notes as if they were attempting to learn them. Old Gabler's round, bright eyes studied the brown-tinted picture of the Parthenon which stood out on the otherwise bare and kalsomined walls of the room.

Once he darted a quick, apologetic glance at the corner of the room where Irene Schultz sat. He turned his eyes away immediately and looked about as if in scrutiny of several of the other students. Irene Schultz's pale features, thin neck and light blue eyes were bent toward the papers on the arm of her desk. She was leaning slightly upon one elbow, her shoulders a bit stooped.

"And—er—now—" Old Gabler's voice was a bass drone that belied his quick eyes. "—Miss McFarland on—" He stopped to refer to the page on his desk. "—on Gormys Creatures that Once Were Men."

Miss McFarland's over-rouged cheeks "fought" slightly with her silk blouse of light green. She rose with a languidness hardly concealed and directed her voice at old Gabler rather than at the class. The students about her went back to their reading of notes and following grooves in the arms of their desks soon after she had begun reciting.

Maxim Gorky was the author of the book she had read. He was one of the younger authors of Russia. He had come from a very poor family and had had a very hard time to make a living when he was a boy. He knew the poor classes of Russia so well. That was why he wrote of them in this book and in other books he wrote. The book described a kind of a poor hotel in Russia and showed the evils of liquor among the poor classes in Russia. The book showed that the living conditions among the poor classes of Russia were very hard. The book was somewhat complicated in some places, but it gave one a very good picture of how the poor people lived there.

Miss McFarland sat down abruptly and watched anxiously as Old Gabler made mysterious remarks on one of the cards on his desk.

Irene Schultz was next. She was getting her notes together even before Miss McFarland had quit reciting. She was unbelievably tall as she stood up. Her left hand kept opening and closing upon the arm of the desk beside her as she began her recitation.

Old Gabler was sitting straight in his chair. His eyes were upon his desk. He had taken up his pencil and was drawing little triangles upon his class record. Inside these triangles he drew inverted triangles of a like size until a row of six-pointed stars had been formed across the top of the page. In another moment he had the stars colored black. It was only the matter of a few more moments until the stars were transformed into circles.

"... but the plot of the novel is very simple." Her slightly jerky voice seemed to be flowing toward him like a thin trickle of water. "It shows the effects of Nihilism on a young Russian scientist, and there is also a love element in the story that . . ."

There was no longer any room at the top of the page for circles. Old Gabler began at the bottom of the page, drawing squares this time. These squares were quickly transformed into eight-pointed stars by the transposition on them of other squares of the same size. Then he surrounded each square with a large triangle.

Irene Schultz's words came quicker now, as if she were about to reach the end of her recitation.

"I think that it is a very good novel. Turgenev has shown very subtly the effects upon two young university students of ingratitude toward their parents. That, I believe, is the lesson that Turgenev has tried to teach us in the novel. He has brought out that which he wanted to show very clearly by contrasting the one student, who is extremely neglectful of his parents, with the other student, who afterward learned to understand more of

what his parents meant to him. . . ."

Was it because she was so unusual in appearance? Old Gabler wondered, or was it her talk with him at the desk that time that had led him to hope that she would be another Zeitland?

Just as Irene Schultz closed her recitation and sat down, the bell rang for the end of the class period. The students rose precipitately and made their way out. Old Gabler nodded to Irene Schultz as she passed. She stopped.

"Do you like Turgenev, Miss Schultz?"

"Oh, yes, sir. I enjoyed this book a great deal."

Old Gabler's eyes were more round and bright than usual. His smile was anxious and defenseless.

"I've wanted to tell you so many times, Professor Gabler, how much I enjoy this course." She was awkwardly, almost pathetically poised in front of his desk. "I like reading very much and the Russian writers are so unusual, don't you think? At first I couldn't understand them. They seemed so queer and their stories didn't even seem to have a plot to them. But I think it was I who was at fault, Professor Gabler, for not really grasping the lessons they were trying to teach. I do believe that I did get the lesson Turgenev was trying to teach in 'Fathers and Sons.'"

"Russian literature," said old Gabler slowly, dully, "is very interesting."

Miss Schultz smiled almost gratefully, nodded, and closed the door softly behind her as she left the room.

III

FOOTSTEPS in the hall outside sounded loud for the next few moments as old Gabler, still seated at his desk, traced more designs on his class record. Finally he arose, picked up his books from the desk one at a time, and, as an afterthought, placed his fountain pen in his vest pocket. He went back to his room to read for the rest of the day.

He took dinner that evening at the University Club and listened silently to two young engineering instructors who

were discussing the relative abilities of the quarterback and the end on the Ohio State team. After dinner he returned again to that marvelous room where there were towering shelves of books on every side except the one on which the table and bed were located. He filled his calabash pipe and took down an old, leather-bound book that had once been in the library of some French priest who lived in an ancient town on the banks of the Loire.

At eleven o'clock he closed the book and placed it in its old position on the shelf. He wound the alarm clock, and, sitting on the edge of the bed, began to unlace his shoes. The light from the electric reading lamp cut a keen segment out of the dim room and he stopped for a moment to watch the smoke from his calabash pipe drift slowly toward the gleam.

"Dry as dust?" he muttered half aloud.

He had known for several semesters that students had applied this description to his course. But suppose—suppose that he should rise from his chair and face the class some day. He had always thought that he would some day do that. He would be very quiet and sure. And his voice would be low.

"Dry as dust? And I live with Bazaroff and Mademoiselle de Maupin and Ernest Pontifex and Julien Sorel and Raskolnikov. I am they. Dry as dust?"

"And you? You will go through life in a long, dusty procession. Yes, each one of you humped low over the wheel of a little, high automobile, driving always to the next place. You will stop only to buy the cherry-colored refreshment that is advertised on the billboards and to buy the magazines with pink and cream covers. Dry as dust?"

But old Gabler knew that he would never say it. He had thought of it often enough before. . . . It must have been those pale, eager eyes that had caused him to place all that hope in her. But, there had been Zeitland.

He pulled down the shades, drew back the coverlet and went to bed. He was very tired.

The Old Woman of Mole Street

By *L. M. Hussey*

I

MOLE STREET lingers on in the city, a disreputable reminiscence of an older time. It is blind at one end and opens at the other upon a thoroughly modern thoroughfare near the theatre district. At night the surrounding streets are populous and lit brightly with the multitudinous lamps of electric signs; Mole Street is dim and there are shadows which seem sinister.

Its houses are old, small, made of wood, and in a year or two, no doubt, they will be condemned and torn down and new edifices will be reared up out of steel and concrete in the new order of things.

The old woman's wooden house contained five rooms, all of them cubical and limited. When possible she let two of these rooms to a low class of lodgers and the term of their lease often terminated dramatically in shrill words and abuse as the old woman ejected them for failure to pay her the rent. Now and then the police came and removed some thieving lodger, traced to that abode.

The old woman had an evil face, marked over like a map of rivers with cunning wrinkles. Her eyelashes were gone and her bleached eyes were circled around with red lids. She was very small; there was something malignant in her smallness, like the undersize of a dwarf. When she walked the streets she conversed with herself in a low, indignant mumble. She was, however, known to laugh, but there seemed to be an invariable perversity to her mirth. She laughed at accidents in the streets; the sight of an ambulance would make her cackle. A passing funeral proces-

sion brought a grin to her face as if, having cheated death herself, she found the sight of it an invariable joke. When her lodgers were seized by the police she watched them out of sight with a continuous sputtering.

At one time or other she had been married; at any rate, she had a daughter. Part of her support came from her lodgers, but now, in her senility, her major income was derived from the earnings of the girl.

This child had known Mole Street for many years, and work for nearly as long. She grew up very thin, with the pallor of those who remain in dark places and encounter little of the sun. Although her mother accused her of it, she was not indeed ugly. Her face, if anything, was pathetic.

The cheekbones were a little prominent, because her cheeks wanted their proper fullness. In her thin face the eyes were accentuated and their largeness seemed to contain a slight but invariable suggestion of pain.

Her work in the factory kept her busy all day. When she returned in the evening she prepared supper in a small kitchen that smelled of the grease of a thousand meals. At a small table in this kitchen she sat down with her mother to eat. The old woman chewed upon her food noisily and the noise of chewing and deglutition was interrupted only by her mumbled complaints.

She complained of a variety of things, of everything. A chief overtone of her complaint was an abusive disparagement of her daughter. She accused her of indolence, of sloth, of indifference. Then, mainly, she berated her for a lack of beauty. In the lines of the girl's face she found an especial and perpetual

affront. Now and then she hinted obscurely that a lovely daughter could have earned money for both of them, easily.

For the most part Mary had grown insensible to her mother's ways. She listened to the muttered disparagements without reply; sometimes, thinking of other things, she did not hear them. She sat through the supper in silence, washed the dishes when they were through the meal and afterward, while the old woman dozed and muttered by turns, she sat down at the cleared table to read a certain page of the newspaper.

This was her daily extravagance. She brought home the newspaper every evening and read the page for women on which were printed the letters girls wrote about their perplexities in love, and the replies by the Heart Editor. There were two columns of these every day and, furthermore, a column of heart discussion wherein girls were told how to win their lovers—always with modesty and a superior goodness—and married women instructed in the art of keeping their husbands' affections.

Mary spelled out the words with difficulty, but this want of facility in reading served to intensify her interest. It added the extraneous charm of a puzzle to her diversion. Absorbed in this adventure with the printed page, she was magically made an actor in another, far different, life. Through the cheap confessions of her nightly reading she learned of romantic things and within the limits of her imagination appropriated them to herself. She had imaginary lovers and with them imaginary trials that by virtuous acts were endured and conquered. Her brain conceived the stuff of a hundred cheap novels through which she moved as heroine.

Meanwhile, her actual life proceeded without unusual event. Until she was twenty she lived with the old woman, her mother, and the old woman came and went in Mole Street as always, with a senile malice in her heart toward everyone, toward everything, save only one creature, her curious pet—a cat.

II

WHEN Mary was twenty a new event occurred in her life. The sentimentalities of her imagination were replaced by those of fact.

One of the old woman's lodgers fled suddenly by night, before the police came to take him. The room was vacant for several weeks and then a young man saw the card in the window, came in to examine the room and engaged it.

The old woman announced the new lodger to her daughter in a characteristic way.

"The last one was a second-story man," she said, "and this one looks like a pickpocket. I guess he's just a learner. When he gets older he'll do for somebody like Bates that lived here four years ago and then they'll hang him sure!"

She laughed; her little face, mapped with wrinkles, grew red with her cackling. The cat, curled in a ball on her meagre lap, stretched and purred.

Mary, listening with half-attention, was indifferent. Supper had been eaten and she sat in her chair too tired and languid even to read. Her lassitude brought with it a shadowy melancholy that enveloped her like an atmosphere. A shadowy discontent possessed her and made her sad. She half-realized her drudging life and resented it.

Meanwhile, the old woman, as if under the urge of a special malignancy, berated the new lodger. She stroked the cat, and addressed to him her complaint. The girl sat with her melancholy and ceased to hear.

Indeed, she did not see the new lodger until after he had been in the house several days. Then she met him one evening as she returned from work. He was standing on the wooden steps in front of the house. He was obliged to draw aside to let her pass; she did not speak to him.

He was a boyish-looking fellow, with nothing vicious in his face to confirm the old woman's opinion. Indeed, his face was innocent; it was without guile; it was the face of a young workingman whose mind is somewhat

dulled by hard labor. His eyes were blue, and rather round; his lip was thinly covered by a yellowish growth of hair like a light smudge of dirt; a lock of his yellow hair hung down over his forehead, close to one eyebrow. When Mary entered the house he stared after her.

The following evening he was again waiting on the steps when she came in. This time, seeing him there once more, she found herself confused. It seemed strange to pass him, since he belonged to the house, without speaking, yet her timidity restrained a ready greeting.

As she came up the steps, her eyes lowered, he smiled at her.

"Are you the girl that belongs to the house?" he asked.

She stopped and stood near him on the steps. She did not raise her eyes.

"Yes," she answered, in a low voice.

"I thought so," he continued. "I've heard you talking to your mother in the evenings. I've wanted to meet you. My name's Tom Lynch."

Mary felt her cheeks redden, and of this warmth she was ashamed.

"Pleased to meet you," she murmured.

She hurried past him, into the tiny, dusky hallway, but he stepped in after her and called to her.

"I say," he called; "I don't know anybody in this town. I'm pretty lonesome. I don't know what to do with myself evenings. Couldn't you go out to a movie or something with me this evening?"

His words flushed her with a strange, romantic emotion, as if he had spoken with poetic phrase, proposing an intimate sweet adventure. He was lonely; the sense of her own loneliness enveloped her darkly; she pitied him; she pitied herself. She wanted to say yes to him, but her timid lips refused the simple, affirmative word.

"Sure," he said, urging her. "You'd like to go out, wouldn't you? You'll let me take you to a movie or somewhere?"

Mary forced the word to her lips with a kind of hard physical effort.

"Yes," she said.

During supper her thoughts were upon the adventure. The old woman, sitting opposite her at the wooden table, was in an abusive mood. She stared at the girl, she laughed her evil laugh and she said:

"You're growing uglier every day. You're as ugly as mud. Good God! where did I get me such a girl? Why aren't you pretty?"

She swallowed an immense bite in disgust, then coughed violently to dislodge the bolus that stuck in her throat.

"No man wants to have anything to do with you!" she sputtered. "Think of the money we could make if you were a pretty girl!"

Mary was indifferent; an excitement pervaded her and she did not hear her mother's words.

When she had cleared away the dishes she told the old woman she was going out.

"I'm going out with Mr. Lynch," she said.

"Mr. Lynch!"

She cried this out shrilly and began to laugh. An obscene mirth shook her like an ague; her face grew purple red, her breath was taken and expelled in difficult gasps.

Mary left the kitchen, went to her little room, where she changed her dress, combed her hair, and hummed a little tune to herself.

The boy was waiting for her below on the steps. They greeted each other and then their lips grew sterile of words as if they were compelled to silence by an atrocious witchery. They sat together in the picture house, they returned to Mole Street with the spell of a difficult silence still upon them, and finally Mary said good night in the hallway.

Then Tom took her hand, the darkness protected them as by a magic cloak of invisibility; she did not resist him, but let him kiss her, and received his kisses willingly.

"I'm not going to be lonely no more," he whispered. "You're a dandy girl!"

She did not answer him; she thought that her heart would suffocate her with its size and swift beating.

III

THEN they went out in the evening, and the old woman remained in the kitchen, alone with her cat. Toward these new events she developed a special deep malignancy. Mary ignored her.

She sat alone, in the dark, and talked to the purring cat. Now and then the large animal lifted his face and two flaming eyes, like unreal jewels, met her own in the darkness.

"That fellow," she said, "is a dirty crook. He hasn't a penny; he's a rotten crook. Some day they'll come here and take him away for a hanging!"

Her imbecile laugh jarred in the room; the cat purred.

At mealtimes she watched her daughter's face and detected the new glow in her eyes, the unusual smiles on her lips. Mary was happy; the old woman resented it. She resented it as if happiness were personified, as if happiness were an enemy. She found in Mary's eyes, in the new smiles, an especial affront to herself. She talked to the cat, she threatened obscurely in the darkness of the kitchen. The syllables of her evil complaint stirred in the room like the half-comprehensible forms of a recon-dite curse.

Mary had ceased to read in the evening paper of lovers' trials and advice to them. She was engrossed now in her own romantic world which she embraced with an immeasurable simple faith. Her imagination did not go far into the future, the moment mainly sufficing. She was full like a brimming cup with a simple delight that had the aspect of a limitless enduring. Sometimes she spoke little sentences to herself.

"Tom loves me," she said. "And I love him, I love him!" It was a high, poetic phrase.

Then, with her happiness she endured a few weeks of tormenting fear. Tom took sick and lay in his little room, moving from side to side of his inadequate bed, his cheeks flushed red, his eyes unusually bright. She arose early to nurse him, she hurried home at night to be near his side. In spite of her

fears, her power of devotion stirred her with a deep content.

He grew better, he was convalescent and they could sit in his room, the hand of one in the other. It was under these circumstances that Tom asked her to marry him.

One day in the Fall neither of them went to work but walked instead to the City Hall where they sat in the license bureau, waiting their turn. The necessary questions were answered, a magistrate performed the ceremony, they ate lunch together in a cheap little restaurant, staring into each other's eyes like folk bound by a peculiar spell. Afterward they went back to Mole Street.

The old woman was sitting alone in the kitchen.

"Mother," said Mary, "Tom and I were married today. . . ."

Tom advanced, smiling.

"Go to the devil!" screamed the old woman.

He stopped, grinning in embarrassment. Mary took his hand and drew him out of the room.

Her poor mother, her poor mother! She was growing worse each day. . . .

IV

THE weeks passed and an enticing scheme drifted in a vague diablerie through the old woman's mind. In the beginning it was nebulous; it was like an evil presence ever changing its form, going and returning.

Day after day this scheme bulked larger, loomed more clearly. Alone in the kitchen, she sat with her cat and conceived it, and as the form of it emerged, her mirth increased. Her mad laugh filled the room with an unreality of sound; the cat purred.

One day when Tom entered the room he was astonished to find her grinning at him. Her scowls had vanished, her malicious stares were gone.

"Ha!" she exclaimed. "Tommy! You're my son; you're my little boy!"

The greeting pleased him. His simple friendliness expanded; he was glad, while he pitied the old woman.

"Sit down, Tommy," she said.

He indulged her, smiling.

She touched his hand; her fingers were withered, the flesh was like parchment.

"Poor devil!" she muttered.

"What do you mean, mother?"

She croaked unintelligibly, with a malign melancholy in her tone.

Then she said:

"You're too young, Tommy! you don't know anything about girls. . . ."

He smiled, but looked at her with puzzled eyes.

The wrinkles on her ancient face conformed to the lines of an immense cunning.

"Watch her!" she whispered. "Watch her! You don't know a good girl from a bad one!"

He seized her arm, but she freed herself from his grasp. Cackling, she shuffled out of the room. Later, standing at the open corner of Mole Street, she watched the familiar figure of a young magazine and newspaper vendor who had his wooden stall at that place. She walked back and forth, looking at him, grinning, muttering to herself. At last he noticed her.

"What's wrong with you?" he asked, exasperated.

She grinned and took herself away.

The next day, as Tom was leaving for his work, he found the old woman, as if in ambush, waiting in the hall. The hall was dim; her eyes gleamed chatoyantly like those of her cat. She seized his arm and pressed her bony fingers into his flesh.

Her voice was a scarcely audible whisper.

"What was she doing last night—when you went out? You lamb! You poor devil!"

"What do you mean!" Tom demanded. "Who? What are you talking about?"

"Ah, I know her, Tommy, I know all her ways! I know her acts. You're a poor devil, Tom; you're a lamb, you poor devil!"

He stood in the dark hall, staring at her grinning, imbecile face. She convulsed herself with a hard cackling; she

interrupted her cackles with noises of malignant pity. Tom pushed by her and went on to his work.

Then she caught him; she ambushed him at all times. She met him on the steps and hissed a word as he entered, and watched after him as he tramped into the house. When he greeted Mary she stood behind her daughter's back and grimaced meaningly, as if they shared an ugly secret. She waylaid him again and again in the dim hall and charged him with diabolic warnings. When he was alone in his room she pounced in upon him with surprising agility, croaked a word, and disappeared. He grew confused. Tormenting doubts disturbed his simplicity.

One evening, sitting opposite Mary, he watched her as she stitched the hem of a dress. He examined her face like one might scan an obscure puzzle; he looked at her eyes, her lips, the curve of her cheek and hair.

"Mary," he said, abruptly, "what did you used to do before I came here? How did you spend your time?"

She smiled; her eyes remained on her work.

"I was lonesome, Tom," she said. "I didn't do nothing."

Her reply, delivered so naturally, exasperated him. It seemed to imply an exceptional duplicity. She did not observe the heavy frown above his candid eyes. He arose and walked heavily out of the room.

He went to the bedroom and stood at the window, looking down into the obscurity of Mole Street. The glow of the city lay like a light, diffused flame, above the small houses of the street.

Tom spoke aloud.

"The old woman's crazy," he said. "None of that stuff is true. It's all bunk."

He turned from the window and walked up and down the room. A lock of his yellow hair fell down over one eye; he brushed it back angrily. The muscles of his heavy shoulders moved tightly under his thin shirt.

"I wish I could catch someone!" he exclaimed. "I wish I could catch him—if it's true!"

For several days he was morose; Mary questioned him with troubled eyes and lips. Then he grew cunning. It occurred to him that he must watch; if she suspected he might never learn the truth. His simple cunning took the form of a constant grin in Mary's presence. Meanwhile, the old woman, for a week, had ceased to ambush him.

He wondered at this. His slow mind pondered it, puzzled it, and resolved a solution. She had grown afraid; she was hiding the truth. He waited for the first opportunity with her alone.

She was seated in the kitchen, with the cat in her lap. She stroked the animal with a strange fondness; she spoke curious endearments close to its face. Tom stood in front of her frowning.

"Look here," he said; "you've got to tell me everything. I've got to know the whole truth. You're talking about Mary, aren't you? Well, then, what's she done; what's she doing now? I've got to know the whole business. If she is doing anything, I've got to know it!"

The old woman spoke to her cat; she stroked its sleek fur; the cat purred.

Tom bent over her, seized her wasp-like shoulders in his great hands, and shook her until her head wagged back and forth on the knotted stem of her neck.

"Damn it!" he cried. "Say something. Answer me!"

She gasped for breath; she pushed him away with her bony hands.

"Wait!" she whispered. "I'll show you. Wait, Tommy, you poor devil!"

In his anger he felt that he could grasp the old woman in his strong hands and squeeze the secret out of her meagre body. But he did not touch her. He drew back, stood in irresolution for a moment, and then left the room.

V

A FEW evenings later the old woman crept through the small house like a noiseless spirit. She went to Tom's room and stopped in front of the cheap bureau. Opening the bottom drawer she peered in, thrust in her hand, and searched among the odds and ends within. Her head encountered a hard

object. She drew it out, looked at it in the dim light and replaced it carefully, laying it on top of everything. Thus assured, she crept downstairs.

Mary was in the kitchen, preparing supper. The old woman could hear her there, and heard her humming a tune. Although she did not see the girl this hummed tune presented the girl's face, as if it were there in the dusky hall, before her eyes. She could see the new smiles, the new glow of the eyes, the little spots of unusual color in her cheeks. The old woman grimaced venomously and then grinned.

She went out to the street, and muttering to herself, walked hurriedly to the corner. At the corner she stood near the stall of the young newsdealer. After a moment he noticed her.

"What do you want, mother?" he asked, amiably.

She drew close to him, she whispered.

"Do me a favor, dearie," she said.

"Do me a big favor?"

"Well, what is it?"

"I'm afraid, dearie," she whispered.

"There's no one in the house. I'm afraid to go in alone. Someone might be there. Someone might be hiding there and kill me. . . ."

The young fellow laughed; he pitied her.

"What do you want me to do?" he asked.

"Walk down with me," she said.

"Just take a step down and look in the house for me. Make sure there's no one there for me."

The young fellow hesitated. He did not like to leave his stand. However, it would take no more than a minute or two. He granted her whim.

"Hurry along," he told her. "I've only a minute to spare."

She trotted at his side, muttering incoherencies.

They came to the house. The old woman turned sharply and looked up the street. Tom had just rounded the corner.

"Hurry in!" she said, her voice trembling. "Hurry in and look around for me. Look in the kitchen!"

She waited outside. Tom drew near.

He did not see her. His eyes were turned to the ground. He started back when she seized his arm.

"Now!" she cried, hoarsely. "They're in there now, you poor devil! He's just leaving. He's been there all the afternoon. Hurry, you lamb, you poor devil!"

Tom stared only a moment, then bounded up the steps. He stopped abruptly in the hall; there were voices in the kitchen. There was a man's voice—a man talking to Mary.

His impulse was to rush out to them, but his cunning prevailed. Cat-like, he ran up the narrow stairs and entered the bedroom. The dim light of Mole Street came in through the small windows. He kneeled before the bureau, thrust in his hand in the bottom drawer, and found at once his revolver.

When he reached the hall again the voices were still audible. He moved on the tips of his toes, through the hall.

Mary, explaining the vagaries of her mother, apologizing to the young fellow from the corner, was startled to see the door flung open.

Tom strode in with the weapon gleaming in his hand.

The girl, amazed, took a single step toward him.

"Got you now!" he yelled.

He fired; she crumpled at the shot. The young newsdealer sprang forward just as the cat, arising in terror from his place on an old chair, darted under his feet. The cat was trampled, the visitor struck up Tom's arm just as the gun discharged again; a little fragment of plaster dropped down from the ceiling.

The two men struggled, locked together fiercely. Someone outside screamed; there was a tramp of running feet and a policeman rushed into the room. He separated the combatants; Tom was secured.

Suddenly a horrible wail arose in the room. It came from the throat of the old woman of Mole Street, as she knelt upon the floor. Her convulsive legs kicked against the quiet body of her daughter as she gathered up the dead cat into her arms, as she screamed and wept over its trampled form.

It was the last thing she had ever loved on earth, the last that remained of love in her mad and senile mind.



THE bachelor is the man who can make a girl like him at the same time that he is careful to make a disagreeable impression on her parents.



A MAN'S sense of chivalry is equally satisfied by acquitting a woman on trial for murder, or by picking up her handkerchief.



A WOMAN has selected the man she wants to marry when she starts to encourage his rivals.



The Essie Compton Letters

By Oscar Lewis

I

I CANNOT say that my discovery of the Essie Compton letters aroused me to more than mild curiosity. Thomas Dunscomb Halbourn, to my mind, is not a really important figure in our American literature, though I recognize his very considerable gifts. Except in New England, where his name still retains much of its enormous prestige of the '90's, there can be no doubt that in the dozen years since his death there has been a noticeable dropping off of his reputation.

Since the Essie Compton letters came into my possession I have been rereading the works of the distinguished New Englander. My opinion, I find, coincides with the critical estimates of him that have recently appeared by two of our younger men. Halbourn was too essentially a teacher to have been a competent artist. The loyal and plodding Finkle, in the introduction to his *Life of Halbourn*, writes (page xvii) that "he was never guilty of using his gift . . . merely as a means of artistic expression. His message was of supreme importance. One detects . . . a fine carelessness in his manner. . . ."

He was a reformer first; his writings he regarded as a somewhat contemptible adjunct. The reason for this, of course, is obvious. His long occupancy of the Boston pulpit, his work as an editor, his friendship with Roosevelt—all strengthened the reformer's zeal to the ruination of his purely artistic talents. One finds evidences of this not alone in his lectures but in his novels and essays. Even in the *Round Robin*

Papers, which so delighted his admirers a generation ago, I find that too frequently his "whimsicality" is marred by a pompous didacticism, by an inability to forget that the oracle is speaking.

Halbourn seems to me to have been a scholarly and dignified man, but—to put the matter bluntly—much overrated, and the Essie Compton letters, as I have said, awakened me at first to no great enthusiasm. I became more interested, however, after I had learned their true significance.

The exact means by which the letters came into my possession is of little importance. In the spring of 1919, the University schedule placed the hours of my two courses in the middle of the day (they came at eleven and two) and I was able to carry out a plan I had for some time contemplated; that of living at a point farther distant from the campus.

I accordingly left Berkeley and moved across the bay to San Francisco, into three rooms on the top floor of an old house in the South Park district. Although the neighborhood was no longer select, my rooms were secluded and comfortable, and the house itself, a relic of the day when South Park had been the city's most fashionable residential district, pleased me by the frank hideousness of its architecture.

Of the three rooms I had rented, I at first used but two. The third, smaller than the others, and with a north exposure, was detached; to enter it one had to step out upon the landing at the head of the stairs that gave access to the lower floors. During the first

months I used this as a storeroom. It contained a trunk, some miscellaneous baggage, a few useless pieces of furniture. I don't suppose I entered the place once a fortnight.

One afternoon some forgotten errand carried me into the room and an old and very ugly mahogany cabinet attracted my attention. The drawer space in my rooms was inadequate, and, as this seemed commodious, it occurred to me that it might be moved into the front study. I walked about the thing, pulled out the drawers, tried to decide where to put it.

In the dust at the bottom of one of the drawers lay a single, yellowed slip of paper. Some flash of curiosity caused me to pick it up and examine it.

It was the first of the Essie Compton letters.

II

WHEN I call it the first of the letters, I merely mean, of course, that it was first in order of discovery; its date was January 9, 1871, which places it chronologically very near the end. It was one of the shortest of the series, and its content is unimportant. It merely announced Halbourn's safe arrival in the East, and made some obscure reference to a financial matter. It ended with this sentence: "You are to think of me now as one who has found contentment." The letter began, "Dear E. C." It was one of the few of the incomplete series that bore the initials "T. D. H." Nearly all the others were unsigned. To none of them did Halbourn affix his full name.

One evening, several weeks before the discovery of the letter, I had chanced to pick up the first volume of Finkle's biography, which I had not glanced at since the year the work appeared—in 1915, I think. The big red-and-gilt volume was too bulky to be read comfortably in bed and I soon put it aside. But I remember reading a bit here and there and glancing at some of the many halftone illustrations; the drawing-room of the Beacon Hill residence,

the Sargent painting, Halbourn having tea with some of the neighborhood children on the porch of his Vermont cottage. There was a facsimile of a page from the handwritten manuscript of the *Round robin Papers*, and I remember reading this through.

It is a curious thing that a month later when I glanced through the note I at once recognized the similarity in the handwriting. I did not for a moment doubt that the letter had been written by Halbourn; I scarcely needed the confirmation of the initials (T. D. H.) at the bottom. This despite the fact that more than twenty years had elapsed between the first bit of writing and that reproduced in the biography, for the latter was dated 1871, whereas the *Round robin Papers*, according to Finkle, were written in the winter of '94-5.

Although the letter aroused me to no great enthusiasm, my curiosity was strong enough to cause me that evening to turn again to Finkle's biography. I share the common opinion that the work is without value; that Finkle, plodding and industrious, completely lacks the critical and imaginative qualities necessary for his task. I hoped, however, that by reviewing Halbourn's life during the period, I might learn something of the "E. C." to whom the letter had been addressed.

I closed the book at the end of an hour, more interested and a great deal more curious than I had been when I had taken it up. I found, to my astonishment, that Finkle had completely ignored that particular period of Halbourn's life. There was nothing to indicate that he ever had lived in San Francisco, though the letter had made that fact clear. The one reference, indeed, which Finkle makes to the entire period is this short sentence (vol. 1, pg. 461): "Early in 1870, having some concern as to the state of his health, Mr. Halbourn went West, where he remained eleven months."

To the year 1869 Finkle devoted a long chapter. After graduation from divinity school and a year abroad, the young man (Halbourn then was twenty-

eight) was called to his first pastorate, a small and prosperous church in one of the suburbs of Boston. The account of the young minister's first year in the pulpit his biographer has written in detail. The year 1871, when Halbourn lived in New York, and first seriously turned his attention to literary matters, likewise receives a long chapter. Between the two, and covering a phase that certainly was equally important, stands the year 1870, which Halbourn spent in the West, and which is dismissed in his official biography with the curt sentence I have quoted.

It is hardly necessary to state that when at length I put the biography aside and again picked up the letter, I regarded it with a sharper curiosity. I ended finally by slipping the bit of paper into an envelope and mailing it to Finkle, in care of his publishers, enclosing a note in which I related the circumstances under which I had found it.

His reply reached me within a fortnight. I copy it here in full:

Dear Sir:—Thank you for sending the letter. I will state, in answer to your inquiry, that while the penmanship to the casual eye bears some slight likeness to that of Dr. Halbourn, closer examination proves that the resemblance is only superficial.

Have you other letters written by this same hand? If you will send them to me I shall gladly point out wherein the handwriting differs from that of Thomas Dunscomb Halbourn.

Cordially yours,
Edward Finkle.

I did not press the matter further at that time. My interest as yet was not really strong. The episode, indeed, was beginning to fade from my mind when Finkle's second note arrived:

I have waited with interest (*he wrote*) for an answer to my inquiry as to the possible existence of other letters. The likeness of the penmanship to that of Dr. Halbourn, though slight, has aroused my interest. If you have similar letters in your possession I should be very glad to see them. Will you kindly mail them to me?

It was this note that started me on the search that resulted in the discovery

of the remainder of the Essie Compton letters. I enlisted the interest of my landlady, spent the greater part of a Saturday afternoon among dusty boxes in a cluttered attic, and climbed down at last with a little packet that contained the remaining twenty-six letters—all, I am convinced (save for the one I had mailed Finkle), that still exist.

That evening when I returned, at about eight, from dinner, I unfastened the tape that bound the small bundle of letters. Some time after midnight I collected the scattered sheets from my desktop and carefully tied them together again. I placed the packet in a drawer of my desk, drew a breath of sheer amazement, and went to bed.

The following morning I wrote a long letter to Edward Finkle at his Connecticut home.

III

ONE afternoon, less than two weeks after I had dropped my message in the letter-box, I returned from my classes and found Edward Finkle standing before a window in my study, staring tranquilly off across the housetops.

At my first sight of him there in my room, I pictured the man as he must appear on a Sunday morning in the pulpit of his New England church. One knew that in his present surroundings he was not at his best; that some of his impressiveness was gone. I found myself feeling sorry that this was so; almost ready to make excuses for him, and for his present insignificance.

I saw his white hair, his straight, thin-lipped mouth, the quick gestures of his thin hands. He looked, of course, very old; his age, I believe, was eighty-one. We sat facing one another across my desk. He tilted his head toward the ceiling, his arms folded over his narrow chest. I pictured him again as he must appear to his congregation.

"That's the way he sits," I told myself, "while the opening hymn is being sung."

We exchanged commonplaces in regard to his journey, and I was conscious of a curiosity as to how he would broach

this subject that had brought him scurrying across the breadth of the continent. I watched for some hint of his secret feelings, for a flash of embarrassment, a covered tinge of reluctance. I found nothing; he was placid and confident; thoroughly sure of his ground.

"I must tell you about those letters," he said. I can best describe his tone by saying that he spoke "brightly." "You can guess, perhaps, that I did not know of their existence. I was greatly surprised when you told me about them. I tried at first to pretend they were not genuine. That was a grievous error; I am not a graceful liar."

The minister made a quick gesture, as though of impatience at having drifted into ethical discussion.

"But about the letters. One might say that what I must tell you concerning them forms a chapter, an unwritten chapter, in the life of Dr. Halbourn."

My visitor regarded me for a moment before he continued:

"In Chapter Eleven of the biography, you may remember, I wrote what seems a complete account of Dr. Halbourn's life during the months after he was called to his first church. But in reality there is a very serious omission. It was at that time that he met the person to whom the letters were written; the woman you know as Essie Compton. She sang in the choir; she was—er—the soprano. They became, sir, infatuated, although a marriage between them was out of the question. There was a barrier. What the nature of the barrier was is irrelevant; you simply must take my word that marriage was impossible. In every way it was most unfortunate. Perhaps you have guessed what the outcome was."

"Yes," I said, without hesitation, "they disappeared."

"They simply vanished," said he, nodding. "They ran away in the night."

He refolded his arms, cleared his throat, went on in the same tranquil tone:

"Fortunately it was possible to avoid a scandal. The truth has positively

never come out. In the village they believed what they were told; that the minister's health had suddenly broken down and he had gone West. His departure was not connected with that of the young woman, who was understood to have gone to live with relatives. I may add that except for these two, there was only one person who knew the truth. There has never been a breath of suspicion.

"The letters, no doubt," Mr. Finkle continued, "enable one to guess what followed. As you know, when Dr. Halbourn returned to the East, the plan was that she join him in New York after he had established himself. When he presently returned to the pulpit, this project, of course, was abandoned."

All of this I had guessed from the letters.

My visitor paused, but as I refrained from interrogation, his persuasive voice presently continued:

"Perhaps you remember that when Dr. Halbourn died, one feature of his will attracted attention?"

I nodded. In that document he had named an official biographer. That was a novelty which had caused discussion in some quarters. I believe there was an editorial in the book section of the *Times*.

"Dr. Halbourn did not merely appoint me his biographer," said Finkle. "He did more than that: he made it impossible for anyone except myself ever to perform that office. So far as possible, he barred all outsiders from access to the necessary data and material. In this he succeeded very well. No story of his life, except the one by my hand, has appeared. It is very unlikely that any will appear. Do you understand why he did not want other biographies?"

"Certainly," I said. "There was the Essie Compton episode."

"He wished, of course, to cover that up," agreed Finkle. "While Dr. Halbourn lived he exerted a great influence. He hoped that it would continue after he was dead. He therefore took steps

to prevent this unfortunate affair from becoming known."

I nodded.

"And did he choose you," I asked, "because he thought you agreed with him in that?"

My visitor spoke with some impatience. "He did not want merely to *think* on this subject; he wanted to know. He wanted his life to be written by someone of whom he could be sure. He chose me. Why?"

The man suddenly was leaning forward in his chair.

I thought carefully.

"First," I said, "will you tell me what has become of Essie Compton?"

Finkle stared at me with real surprise.

"I don't know what has become of her," he said. "I presume she is dead. Essie Compton, by the way, was not

her real name; rather, it was her maiden name." He brushed this subject aside with one of his curt gestures. "I asked you why Halbourn chose me to write his biography."

In a moment I too was leaning forward.

"Did he choose you," I asked, "because you were Essie Compton's husband?"

My visitor leaned back, his hands on the chair arms. He nodded gravely. I seemed to see him again in his church; he was waiting now, the sermon was over. Presently he would rise for the benediction.

"Now," he asked, "may I have the letters?"

I drew the packet from the drawer of my desk and passed them across to him.



Impotence

By Bernice Lesbia Kenyon

THESE stones are waiting to be overturned
 And rendered back to their sweet wilderness;
 These towers raise their arms in mute distress,
 Cursing the sky toward which their builders yearned,
 Combing the errant winds to fraying strands,
 Rigid with rage, their prisoned elements
 Transfixed. So I, in my stark impotence,
 Strain in the dark with vain uplifted hands.

I shall grow used to impotence at length,
 Knowing that time will grant me late release
 From strifes and wonders that are but begun.
 When I have lost my passion and my strength,
 I shall have surfeit of the sky and sun,
 Drowned in their softness, and their utter peace.



Men

By Julian Kilman

I

Mind and Matter

HIS frame is big; the whole body is fat, gross. When he walks the weight of his legs compels him to throw them forward, each in turn. This causes the toes to swing inward. The nose is flattened; the eyes brown and little; the complexion leaden. Fully half of the cigar is held inside the mouth. It is early September and for more than a month the daily papers have been discussing the coming gubernatorial campaign. Standing in the little cigar-stand at the corner, he says:

"I see they're goin' to run a governor this fall."

II

Intellectuality

He is middle-aged, bald-headed and married. He has been in the library for twenty years and knows everything—is a shark in reference work. Every morning he goes back in the stacks and loafs for a number of minutes by the water-cooler which stands a bit to the left of the iron stairway leading to the second-floor stacks. The stairway itself, as well as the floor of the stacks, is made of filigree ironwork with plenty of interstices. When the young girls mount the stairs on errands for books they try to hold their skirts close to their bodies.

III

Venturers

They stand facing each other in the dirty, ill-smelling Syrian confectionery. They are young men; they are of fair complexion, American born, medium height. They have just struck up an acquaintance.

"I'm only twenty-five years old and I been four years in the navy."

"Well, I seen some of the old world myself."

"I seen every damn country that water touches."

"I was in Siberia with an American contracting company an'—"

"I seen Singapore, Calcutta, Bombay, Vladivostock, Liverpool, Melbourne—all them damn places. You can cross-examine me on any of—"

"In Siberia—"

"But what's the use?"

"It don't get you nothin'."

"Let's take a walk. I know where you can get—"

IV

Retribution

In 1912, being at that time about thirty years old, and handsome and dark of eye, he was indicted for participation in the blowing of a rural postoffice safe. His yegg-name was "The Age Kid," an appellation given him because of a dollar-sized albino spot of white in the black hair toward the back of his head. The government claim was that he was the advance man who sold shoe laces and court plaster and planned the

crimes for his confederates who would come on later. In his bag, when arrested, were three or four items, to wit, a revolver, a soiled pair of pajamas, a bundle of pornographic picture cards, and a dog-eared paper-covered copy of "The Decameron." His attorney, since become a judge, succeeded in getting him acquitted when everyone knew he was guilty. There happened to be a missing link

in the evidence. Since then he has made much money dealing in liquefied eggs. He buys the "checks," "spots" and "rots," breaks them into huge vats, doctors them with salicylic acid and sells the stuff to second-rate, cheating bakeries. He is reputed to be worth \$50,000, and goes to church. His three companions were all convicted and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment at Atlanta.



Peripatetica

By W. S. Sears

WHEN the Platos, the Kants, the Nietzsches and the Schopenhauers have settled finally the nature of beauty and truth and virtue, the meaning of pleasure and pain, illusion and reality, the freedom of the will, and the existence of God, men, when they walk abroad, will still speculate whether the woman who looks so stunning from behind will prove as beautiful when approached from the front. . . .



WOMEN are not content with tasting happiness. They always want to write down the recipe.



MEN are disagreeable when they become personal. Women, when they become impersonal.



THE devil goes among men looking for recruits. Among women, for deserters.



Mame's Daughter

By Emanie N. Sachs

I

PHILIP SHIRLEY stumbled over a loose brick in the pavement. His "Damn!" had a fervor altogether out of proportion to the situation. As a matter of fact he was in a mood to condemn all small towns in general, and Merville in particular. He had been so horribly bored during three days of unsuccessful litigation. The leisurely method of doing business, interspersed with humorous anecdotes about fellow-townsmen whom he didn't know, the sudden veer to emotion and sentiment, the apparent inability to "come down to brass tacks" and get things done, and then the final failure of his mission made his impatience to get back to where he belonged almost a physical attitude. And here were three hours to be killed before train time. Even the motion pictures were closed. Another example of the integration of the town. There was a Revival Meeting going on, and the man who ran the "Bijou" and the "Star" owned the ground on which the tent was pitched.

Philip had wandered from the town to the hill that topped the chief residential street. A wide, comfortable street, bordered with a row of huge sugar maples. And the square houses all hovered far back in the midst of enormous lawns, where ancient trees brooded over the black greenness of the grass that is sometimes called blue.

It was very dark, and the houses, white-columned all of them, looked lonely and forbidding in spite of their generous lines. It was so still that each step he made echoed smartly on the uneven pavement. He found himself irri-

tated at the sound of his own footsteps.

And then, coming down an alleyway, he heard the peck-peck-peck of high-heeled shoes. It was an alleyway of pulpy red clay, leading to a group of shanties, and thence to the railroad station. He remembered that it also led to "the other side of town," to be mentioned with sly winks and a dig in the ribs. It had taken him less than three days to learn all of Merville's geography, social and topographical, not because he was observant—far from that—but because Merville was so elemental in its divisions.

He quickened his pace. The alleyway ended blindly in the street where there was an arc-light. He could look at his watch and see how much longer he would have to wait. It was very clear and cold, and the stars looked like bits of pale and brittle glass. He was strangely glad to hear that peck-peck-peck that signaled the approach of someone—someone picking her way along the smooth, round stones that emanated helter-skelter from the mud.

Just then the arc-light flared out with a noise, and a finger of carbon fell to the rocky street and broke. The peck-peck-peck came nearer and Philip made out the small, dark-draped figure of a woman. As she emerged into the powdery radiation Philip realized that he was staring intently at her shoes. He had an absurd desire to see if they were caked with red clay. They were very tiny, dull, black slippers, with extraordinarily high French heels, dainty, not a smudge on them.

He raised his eyes, curiously, absently, to see what her face was like. It was like no face he had ever seen

before. Her beauty was amazing. He found himself staring at her with absolute lack of self-consciousness. He had once stood for hours like that before a picture of a woman in white at the Metropolitan. But this one was in black. Soft folds of soft material that fell beautifully from rust-colored hair. He came to himself in a minute with an actual start, and muttered, "I beg your pardon." Her enormous topaz eyes, onyx-fringed, looked rather pitifully into his. She nodded her head with gentle quietness, and turned, walking down the hill in front of him. There was youth in her walk—a hesitant youth—and exceeding grace.

Philip followed on down the hill toward the town. He had no other place to go. He had made no social connections with his business acquaintances. His Merville opponents had chosen to take his official opposition as personal. But he was not quick to make friends anyway. He was reserved. Conventional. His thoughts ran easily into well-worn grooves. He had never been quick to make friends, and the few that he possessed were not close. They had come about through the natural channels of family connections.

Women interested him not at all. There had been a girl once—the sister of his roommate at college—but she hadn't cared. He had his work and his clubs, and golf, and sometimes a little tennis. The inaccessibility of Merville would get him back home just too late to go and play golf. He would have a dismal Sunday in New York.

He grasped the cane that always accompanied him, to Merville's not too secret amusement, and lunged futilely at an enormous fire hydrant at the next corner. The metal rang with a dull thud, and the sombre little figure lolling along in front of him stopped suddenly, and then went on, and—just as suddenly—Philip remembered her face.

She turned down a corner, and aimlessly Philip turned too, and saw that she was evidently headed for a huge tent nearby. Of course the revival meeting! He might as well go and see what

it was like. It would take up time. The tent was bulging with people, but he could stand in the back and hear well enough. It was the Evangelist's last night in Merville. Those who were converted had come to sob a grateful good-bye and to receive a fervent handshake.

Brimstone and glory dispensed under red-and-white striped canvas. Simple white was not in Tom Grant's line. The sawdust floor with its faint odor of malt; the hard benches, unpolished, with splinters that caught in your clothes; the hanging kerosene lamps, shining under fluted tin reflectors and sputtering when an unwary bug quivered too near the flame to drop, frenzied, to a fiery end, contributed each its dole to the passion of Tom Grant's inextinguishable tongue.

II

PHILIP SHIRLEY shifted uncomfortably from one foot to another, and felt his shoes sink slightly into the soft ground. It all impressed him as being so unbelievably cheap and tawdry, and these people were responding with such terrible earnestness. It was depressing. He decided to leave. It was not his way to explore. He stayed with people he knew, people he knew all about, whom—well—people you could always understand. They didn't let themselves go.

He made a move toward the back of the tent, and an usher, misunderstanding his objective, motioned him toward a seat, well up front. He shook his head, but the man, a sanctimonious individual with dark rectangles of hair growing down in front of each ear, was insistent, and Philip's choice was to take the seat or be conspicuous. He followed the man, wondering vaguely if he wouldn't have made an excellent butler.

Tom Grant was leaping angrily from one side of the raised platform to the other. Cords stood out on his neck and forehead. His face was a mottled red. He grabbed his collar, and tore it from its moorings, and bits of cloth dripped from it.

"I tell you, those sinners will lick out

parched tongues to the flames of the bonfires in Hell. And the women—God's fairest flowers—what of them? The women of today, dancing on the brink of Babylon's eternal fall. Hovering on the precipice of everlasting sin. Their pretty faces and their smooth white bodies won't save them. No. God is no man to be betrayed by weeds that rot in filthy sin. See them," and he pointed a shaking, accusing finger out over the tent, "wrapped in shining silk. Where'd they get their finery? That's what I'd like to know. Who paid for their trappings? Sweated husbands and fathers? No. Paid for with sweat from the oozing brow of Satan."

Tom Grant's voice dropped to a hissing whisper that resounded in the silent tent.

"No!"

It thundered until the smooth, worn pole that held up the center of the striped tent vibrated.

"Bought with the lousy, crawling wages of sin. I tell you, brothers and sisters," and here his tone was measured, "when I hear the swish, swish, swish of a silk petticoat, my heart turns sick with nausea. I say, enter the Scarlet Woman, and the swish, swish, swish, screams, 'Sin-sin-sin.'"

He paused.

Tom Grant believed in dramatic pauses. It was a vital part of his technique. It gave the women a chance to sob, and that added a valuable touch. This time a man groaned horribly and called out a sepulchral "Amen! A-men!"

Philip turned around and saw the girl in black with the wonderful face. Again her beauty affected him—a tingle of surprise. But the sanctimonious usher saw her too, and motioned to a seat back of Philip. She shook her head gently, but finally resigned herself to his insistence and came forward.

Tom Grant stood poised on the edge of the platform, still, very still. A June bug dropped into one of the kerosene lamps and sizzled. A woman next to Philip Shirley drew a long, shivering sigh that echoed. But as the girl in black walked there in the sawdust aisle,

her head slightly bent, her face covered with the sombre drapery of her veil, under the heavy black stuff of her skirt creaked the swish, swish, swish of a taffeta petticoat. And under the hypnotism of Tom Grant's suggestion to everyone in the tent, it did scream, "Sin-sin-sin!" She sank down quickly on the wooden bench, a bit carelessly, perhaps, and everyone—craning curious necks—could see it. The petticoat was flame-colored. Underneath the raven weeds of sorrowing grief gleamed gold, with just a magic sheen of crimson. Changeable taffeta. The girl was very young and it was pretty.

"Brothers and sisters, beware of the degenerate little buck-warts who hover around the dirty carcasses in the Red Light District." Tom Grant's voice was quiet and even and so low that his listeners had to strain to hear him. "Let them not approach your pure young daughters. Avoid them as you would a poisoned adder. The arms of infamy spread far out from the unclean environs of the Red Light District. Well, what are you going to do about it? Is Merville going to mammy the saloons and daddy the lewd houses? Are you going to do your duty by the Lord Almighty?"

He stopped and jumped on a chair that swayed as he jumped, and the audience caught their breaths. He stood there, red-faced, breathing hard. The veins in his neck swelled to bloated cords.

The crowd lurched in their seats, curiously at one. Whispers, swelling to audible murmurs, fluttered rhythmically across the tent.

"Everybody in this tent who wants to cleanse the own of Merville stand up! Stand up, you sinners who are not headed straight for hell!"

The crowd rumbled to its feet. A frightened child began to cry in steady, whimpering sobs.

A young fellow in a red tie leaped to the platform and seized the drum, invaluable accessory to a tent meeting. He began to beat it—beat—beat—beat—. A shiver rippled through the tent. Tom

Grant took off his coat and flung it on the floor.

"Everybody in this tent who wants to give the Devil's spawn what's coming to it, sit down!"

Rhythmically, like a well-trained chorus, they took their seats.

But the drum went on. Louder. Louder. Beat—beat—beat. Beat—beat—beat. A man stood up, swaying drunkenly. He sobbed. Wide, loose lips struggled with expression.

"Brothers and sisters, she's here with us. Don't you see her? Didn't you hear her? Sin! Sin! Sin!"

He hiccupped and pointed to the girl in black. Her head was bent low over her seat. "You know who she is?"

"I saw her coming out of Mame's place on Front Street!" shrilled the adolescent voice of a young boy.

"Brothers and sisters," interrupted Tom Grant, "I want to tell you of an experience I had in Chicago—"

But the drunken man's voice was louder.

"See her, sitting here, in the T-Temple of the Lord. She's come to take Mame's place. Can she take Mame's place? Why, Mame's gone to hell. He"—and he pointed a shaking, crooked finger at the tense figure on the platform. "He said so, and he knows what he's talking about—he's a nintimate frien' of the Lord!"

"In Chicago," Tom Grant went on.

But the drum went on, too. Beat—beat—beat.

Philip's mouth felt dry. There was a curious whirring about his ears. Unconsciously he gripped his cane and hardly heard himself say "Damn, damn, damn!" over and over to himself. The girl looked like a black fountain of flowing drapery.

Tom Grant jumped on a chair, and told a funny story in a vain effort to change the mood of the crowd. They were monstrosly at one. Monstrosly in tune with the beat-beat-beat of the drum that drowned the sound of his desperate voice.

An usher carried out a woman who

shrieked the horrid, quavering laugh of the hysteric.

And then an old crone yelled out: "Let's ride her on a rail; she's Mame's spittin' image. Damn her kind! Damn her kind!"

Sobs, loud, convulsive sobs.

A woman began to scream loudly and move toward the platform. She pushed her way through the crowd.

"Let me at her! Let me at her! I'll scratch the eyes out of that dirty face of hers!"

Tom Grant tried to snatch the drum away from the young fellow in the red tie, but he went on—beat-beat-beat! The savage tom-tom sending every man and woman generations back. Tom Grant whispered quickly to the organist. But she was trembling, too frightened to move. He pushed her aside and started up the organ himself. "Lead Kindly Light." But in his excitement he had pushed in the mute so hard he couldn't get it out. The organ only wheezed gently, while the drum louder and louder, beat-beat-beat.

The frenzied woman came nearer and nearer to the girl in black.

"Let's ride her on a rail!"

"Where's a bucket of tar?"

"Kick her down to hell!"

Beat-beat-beat from the drum.

"I say, you know. I say, you know," Philip heard himself saying, and he felt something pounding against his ribs in measure with the drum.

The poles in the tent swayed, and the stripes seemed to quiver and touch as the crowd stamped to its feet and jumped on the seats and made a rush forward, toward the little black figure that sat there so quietly. A man laid a shaking hand on the drooping small shoulders. He pulled brutally at the soft black dress and said the sort of thing that echoes in waves of horror in the brains of decent people.

Tom Grant left his futile organ and began to plead.

"Brothers and sisters, let him among you who is without sin cast the first stone! Brothers and sisters, wait—wait, wait! Listen, friends, listen!"

His voice rose to a roar, but the drum was louder, louder, and the crowd moved faster, faster.

Philip turned around.

"I say you know, I say you know," he said ineffectually.

And then he reached over the seat and lifted the lovely slender figure up in his arms and made a rush for the back of the tent.

"Center rush! Center rush!" his brain kept clicking.

The girl was very quiet and still, lovely, fragrant. He lowered his head protectively, and for a second, the crowd, startled, let him pass. But the drum kept on. Beat-beat-beat, beat-beat-beat—until the tent became a snarling, hissing mass. A mob. Beat-beat-beat—beat-beat!

With a curious oneness they veered and followed Philip, trampling a woman who yelped in pain. An old man fell down and they stepped, unheeding, over him. Beat-beat-beat—beat-beat-beat! from the drum, and Tom Grant, calling, pleading, commanding, hoarsely and in vain. White-faced, frightened, his voice even surmounted the drum, but no one heard him. The crowd was out of hand, and someone yelled in a voice that cracked and screamed,

"After the devil, devil, devil!"

A woman screeched a vile name over and over again. Every time she said it Philip could feel the girl shiver convulsively, as if it were a leather lash that cut into the flesh.

III

THE air felt cool and still. The girl was not heavy. Philip had a sense of exultation. It was exciting. Heroic. He, Philip Shirley, heroic. The crowd was gaining. He could hear them. The drum still going, beat-beat-beat—beat-beat-beat! The sound of many feet, running, running! A pistol shot rang out and then another. He bent further over the girl. Damn brick pavements! He stumbled. Up! Up! The whistle of a train. He must reach the station! He was getting out of breath. A whisper from the girl.

"It doesn't matter. You'd better get away. They'll be after you, too." He didn't answer. He didn't dare spare the breath.

The sound of the drum getting fainter. But clearer the beat, beat, beat of many padding feet. The railroad yards at last. Another shot. Two more in quick succession. The buzzzz-z of a bullet. A grade crossing. And the gates down.

"Can you run now?" a murmur to the girl. "Slide under the gate. I've got you!"

He clutched her arm, hard, and pulled her under the gate that stretched across the tracks like the bare white arm of a woman. The steps of a train, just beginning to move. He lifted her up. A lantern crashed down on the tracks. Buzzzz—another bullet, and the angry, baffled yells of the mob. The train began to move swiftly, gaining on a down grade. A brakeman opened the door, and came out—

"What the hell—"

Philip Shirley grabbed his hand, the one that held the red lantern, and shook it.

"We made it, man, we made it!" he said.

The girl leaned limply up against the door.

"Thank you," she said, very simply.

Her heart-shaped face was white. It was so white that her eyes stared out like golden lights in a death's mask.

"Say, you can't stay out here," said the brakeman. The train was going faster. Louder, louder came the noise of steel grinding on steel, and a sudden shower of cinders. "Where are you bound for?"

"Oh!" she said, and then again, "Oh!" as if the word were an effort, wrung out of a great fatigue. It was the most pitiful sound that Philip had ever heard.

Philip, breathing hard, was struggling with an insane desire to laugh. It was so funny, so unbelievable, so absurd.

"I'm sorry, miss, but I've got to." The brakeman made a move toward the door.

Philip stepped to her side and caught hold of her arm.

"We'll just go inside now," he said.

He looked down at his left hand. He was still grasping the handle of his cane. How he had kept hold of it, carrying the girl— He threw it over the rail, and the flying tracks seemed to swoop down and devour it.

He opened the door and drew the girl into the first empty seat. A child across the aisle poised a half-eaten banana just short of her mouth to stare at them. And a fat man in a lavender shirt, with a collar to match, looked at the girl and drew in a whistling breath through protruding lips. The conductor, with a Santa Claus mustache under Mephistophelean eyes, called, "Tickets, please!"

The girl was very quiet. She sat there, silent, her eyes on swiftly moving telegraph poles. Very quiet, and very, very beautiful. There was an uncanny sense of unreality about her. Like a captured princess in a fairy tale—unreal.

"Tickets, please," said the conductor, and touched Philip on the shoulder.

"Er—yes, tickets, of course," said Philip inanely.

"Where are you going?" The man was getting impatient. His words popped out like the explosions of popping corn over a hot fire.

"New York," blurted Philip. "How much? I didn't have a chance to buy my ticket."

"Two?"

Philip glanced at the girl. Again that strong sense of unreality. Sitting there so quietly with her little heart-shaped face, and the brown hair with gold lights in it. A little statue in old bronze, done by a master hand.

"Yes, two." And he reached into his wallet. He must send a wire to the Merville House about his bag.

"Berths all taken," said the conductor. "Stateroom?"

The girl was very quiet. Very quiet. But a color—madeira-tinted—splashed up from her throat to her forehead.

Philip, thinking desperately, could

see only the diamond scarf pin of the man in the lavender shirt, who stood back of the conductor,—an interested listener,—with an unlighted cigar in his mouth, his moist eyes on the girl.

"Yes," said Philip.

And then, turning to the slim figure by his side, he said, "Come," and led her into the drawing-room. The door shut with a click. They were alone.

"Where do you want me to take you? You don't have to go on to New York, you know," he said gently.

She leaned her head back against the white towelling on the back of the green plush seat. Tired, she seemed so very tired! As if something that had held her taut had snapped.

"I haven't any place to go." She said it monotonously, almost pathetically, and as if she had said it before—many times. She put her hand to her forehead and tugged at the lock of bronze hair.

"I haven't any place to go," she said it over again, in a whisper.

Voices echoed in Philip's mind. "Mame's spittin' image." "She is come to take Mame's place." Curiously indifferent, she was, from what one would expect. He wasn't used to people not fitting into proper pigeon-holes. It was confusing.

"I can't ever go back to—Merville."

Her voice was so low that he had to bend his head toward her to hear. It was toneless. He wondered if her voice was really like that. A lock of hair brushed his face. Soft, and fragrant. Then—that curious sense of unreality. She was so lovely, lovely. Like a little statue of old bronze—come to life. Had she come to life? Baffling. And Philip was not usually imaginative. Come to life—for him? "I saw her coming out of Mame's place on Front Street." How clearly he remembered every word. Sharp-edged. Etched in his brain.

"Have you no parents?"

"No." It seemed to be an effort for her to talk in that curiously flat voice. She leaned her head back against the seat and closed her eyes for a second.

So still, still—uncanny, almost as if she were—dead.

"Have you no friends back—there?"

Her eyes opened, one tear, like a ripple, on the surface.

"No—I had been away—" the voice stuck in her throat.

He could see her pressing her fingernails into the soft palms of her hands. Little red marks.

"You have had a sorrow recently?"

She nodded her head, dry-eyed.

"I'm sorry. Can I do something for you?"

She reached up and put her hand against her forehead as if she were resting it there, heavily.

"I don't know. I don't know."

"Where do you want me to take you?"

"I don't know. I have no place to go, you see—no place. You must have some place to go—take me with you." She said it with a terrible lack of guile.

The train stopped then with a jerk. It was very quiet in the stateroom. So quiet that he couldn't think.

"Why—er—what's your name?" he said foolishly.

She put her hand to her forehead—and rested it heavily there.

"It's—why, my name is Elspeth Hart."

The train started again. It went on and on. He looked at her again. She was beautiful. Enchantingly beautiful. Again that touch of unreality. Like something very precious in an art-gallery—under a spell. Hardly real. The entire evening was fantastic. He, Philip Shirley, had rescued a woman from a mob. A woman of the town. "Mame's daughter." Melodrama suddenly descended upon him. Philip Shirley. He wondered if, perhaps, he was in a dream after all. He felt the dusty plush seat. The odor of soot and smoke pressed in his nostrils. And she was so very quiet.

"Wouldn't you—wouldn't you like me to help you get some work?" Quixotic. Foolish of him. "Mame's spittin' image."

"Work—I don't know—" Again her

hand resting heavily against that white, white forehead, so white and smooth, and the lovely hair growing down in a delicate point. "Work, no—I don't think I know how to work. I don't think—they said—there's nothing else for me." Nothing else! Oh, the pity of it, the aching pity of it.

"I am so tired." She closed her eyes and leaned back against the seat, still—uncannily still. "I am so tired, so tired. Please—"

He felt a strange sense as if conflicting thoughts were boiling in the back of his brain, in a little round pan, just above his collar. Her loveliness. Her terrible simplicity. Ineffable pathos. Her loveliness. And the heart-breaking pity of it.

She was looking at him. Her hands were clasped loosely. Her eyes wide-open. But unseeing. Like a deer he had come upon in a clearing in the Northern woods. Startled, unbelievably bewildered. He could see the motion in her soft throat as she swallowed.

"You would be kind," she said. And then he kissed her.

IV

It would have disturbed him mightily had he known that it was the first kiss in her experience. But that he never learned. It was fortunate for his peace of mind that he did not see the *Merville Herald* and its chronicle of his "heroism."

There were two columns on the front page. Tom Grant's sermon was printed in detail, interspersed with a description of the mounting excitement and the culminating event. A gratified comment on Merville's conversion to righteousness. A strong statement from Tom Grant deploring the turn taken at the meeting. He recommended justice for the young man in the red tie, who had seized the drum. The young man, as yet, had not been apprehended. Gratitude was expressed for the presence of mind of a stranger, who had rescued the unfortunate girl and saved the

crowd from themselves. *The Herald* suggested that violence was never the best means.

And then there was a short paragraph explaining Elspeth Hart.

The girl was the daughter of Mrs. Mame Hart, who died recently in her home on Front Street. She has hitherto been unknown in Merville, it is said, as Mrs. Hart kept her in a small school in the East. Mr. Flint, our well-known coroner, telegraphed

for her to come home at the time of her mother's death. Mr. Flint, when interviewed by *The Herald*, expressed deep regret at the occurrence in the Reverend Grant's devotional tent. He said that Mrs. Hart had taken great pains to keep her daughter in ignorance of her mother's profession, but that it was unavoidable at her death that the girl should learn of the same. The Reverend Grant will be missed by his many beloved friends and converts. This year's meetings have been more than usually successful.



Pictor Ignotus

By John McClure

I WOULD paint the star's desire
And the comet's yearning,
I who feel my head afire
And my fingers burning.

And is painting foolisher
Than another calling?
I will paint the stormy air
And the planets falling.

I will paint the Paraclete;
He who looks shall find it:
Color painted on a sheet,
Mystery behind it.



MEN are clay under the hand of Fate; but some turn into heroic statues and others into bric-à-brac.



A WOMAN'S first name can be anything. Her last, anybody's.



Mirage

By John T. Frederick

I

LOLA JOHNSON got out of bed stiffly and hurried across the bare pine floor to the square of rag rug in front of her tall dresser. Shiveringly she drew on her heavy, fleeced union-suit, and buttoned it over her scant bosom. The air of the bedroom, though cold, was damp. In the corner her husband sat lacing his heavy shoes, breathing noisily as he bent his big body to the work. By the light that entered the room's small windows from the narrow orange band rapidly widening at the far-eastern horizon she could just distinguish his shock of dull red hair and the massive round of his shoulders. Presently he rose and clumped down the stairs. Lola heard his pounding on the hired man's door, and then the clink of the milk-pail and the slam of the kitchen screen as he started for the stable.

She combed out her coarse black hair and thrust a few pins into a loose knot at the back of her head, watching the movement of her arms in the small, high mirror. A little shiver ran over her as she thought of the roundness and freshness she had seen in that mirror when it was new, and when she was newly married to Hjalmar Johnson and newly come to the Missouri Slope. Three years was a long time, she thought.

She pushed her feet into loose, low-heeled shoes and walked painfully across the room and down the steep stairs. Her hips and knees were sore and stiff. As she rinsed her face and hands the water in the tin basin, pumped fresh from the cistern, felt warm in the cold air of the kitchen.

Without emptying the basin she dried her skin on the huck roller towel beside the washstand, and turned to the stove.

A few minutes later the smell of kerosene ignited on split jack-pine began to be replaced by that of frying pancakes, bacon, and cheap coffee. Hjalmar Johnson came into the kitchen with his pail full of milk at the same moment that the "hand" emerged from an adjoining room—a narrow, hall-like apartment with a single window tightly closed. The "hand" was a small, bow-legged man, whose drooping shoulders seemed pulled down by his long arms and thick red hands. He mumbled some sort of apology as he placed his hands one after the other in the basin of water, wetted his cheeks, and then rubbed himself briskly with the towel. Hjalmar now approached the basin, scoured his hands, plunged his face in the dirty water, and sputtering through his red moustache applied the towel vigorously to his neck, ears and fore-arms.

Meanwhile Lola poured the new milk into the rust-spotted tank of a small cream separator that stood in one corner of the room, and the "hand" began to turn the crank, slowly at first, then more swiftly. When the noise of the machine had risen to a jerking, metallic, strident whine and the concentric rings on the surface of the milk had begun to throw up drops that splattered over the edge and on the floor, the man reached for the spigot and turned it. With a hissing rush the skimmed milk shot into the pail standing ready, and a moment later a thin dribble of cream began to spatter into an earthen bowl.

Between turnings of the pancakes Lola caught some of the cream in a

small pitcher, and, diluting it with milk, placed it on the table for use in the coffee. The "hand" had left the door of his chamber standing open, and the smell from it began to penetrate the kitchen air, filled as it was with the smoke of burning pancakes and bacon grease. Lola thrust the door shut with her foot, as she passed it on her way from the cupboard to the table with a load of heavy cups and plates.

When Hjalmar pushed back his chair from the table, some fifteen minutes later, the "hand" was still eating noisily and Lola was just ready to begin, having been frying additional pancakes as the men ate. At this moment an automobile horn squawked in the yard outside.

"Well, somebody's early," commented Lola.

"Oh, don't know. It's seven o'clock," Hjalmar rose, his mass of tousled red hair seeming almost to touch the smoky, white-washed ceiling, and walked to the door.

As he opened it to admit a rush of cold, clean air, a well-dressed man stepped on the small square stoop outside.

"How-de-do!" he exclaimed, holding out a gloved hand. "Think I'm pretty early, hey?" His voice was hoarse and a little choked. He pushed back a fur cap from his plump face, red with the cold.

"Hello, Joe." Hjalmar took the hand awkwardly. "Come right in."

"Why, where'd you come from?" cried Lola, coming around the table.

"How are yuh, Lola?" He pulled off his glove to shake hands with her, then turned to the stove. "Been havin' engine trouble all night. Doc Connor got me to drive him out east here—regular man was drunk. Engine was balky, and Doc was in a hurry, so we got a feller that came along to take him on into town, and I thought I'd turn in here to fix her up."

"Sure, sure," commented Hjalmar. "Didn't know you was anywhere in the country."

The man and wife stood on either

side of the stranger by the cookstove, while he rubbed his hands, wiped from his blue eyes the water which the acrid air of the room brought into them, and held his feet alternately in the oven. The hired man still ate noisily.

"Didn't you hear about it? I been out here almost a month now, installin' an' managin' a new garriage an' agency here at Minot. Branch o' the Pioneer Auto Company o' Fargo—Dvorak an' Olson. You know I been with them for four years. I ain't goin' to do any regular garriage work—jest sellin'. Got another feller for the repair work—name Boysen. He ain't here yet."

Hjalmar stirred restlessly. "Well, I got to get at the seedin'," he remarked. He took down from a peg by the washstand a duck coat, lined with sheepskin, the creases caked with dirt. As he pulled it on, his big arms, in flannel shirt and work jacket, filled the sleeves completely. "Kinda cool ridin' the seeder all day," he remarked apologetically, as he buttoned the high collar under his chin and pulled on a heavy, shapeless, fur-lined cap. "Lo, you git Joe some breakfast."

"Yes, I'll bake some more cakes." Lola glanced at the table from which the "hand" was rising reluctantly, and took her empty mixing-bowl to the cupboard.

"Can't you stay for dinner?" Hjalmar paused by the door with his hand on the china knob.

"Oh, no, I got to get on into town soon as I can get squared away. I got a lot on hand today. Going to sell young Hickson a car this afternoon after he gets through at the bank." He laughed jovially.

Hjalmar did not smile.

"I guess he can afford it, likely—the ten per cent loans he's discounted this spring, for seed and feed. Well, drop in when you're out this way," he added shortly, and turned away.

The "hand" shambled after him toward the stable, the milk pail swinging in his red hand at the end of the long arm. He was hunched over his belly as though to hide it from the cold.

II

"SORRY to trouble you this way, Lola," Joe Zerny pulled off the furlined, black overcoat which he had kept on thus far, and laid it on the back of a chair, then sat down to watch Lola. She hurriedly cleared the dishes left by the men from the table, substituted a china plate and cup for the ironstone ones at her own place, and laid a place for Joe. He rubbed the creases from his gray trousers along his plump thighs, then drew a large gold watch by its long-linked chain from his vest pocket and wound it slowly. Finally he loosened the soft collar about his thick neck and rubbed his face with a silk handkerchief.

"It's no trouble, Joe, of course," she had answered.

"You're lookin' well, Lola," he went on.

"I'm afraid not very, Joe." She turned and faced him a moment. He could not deny a deadness in her eyes, a roughness of her skin and of her hair.

"Well, you know what I mean," he replied, driven to defense of his statement. "You always look good to me."

"I thought you'd got over that nonsense long ago."

She brought the platter of cakes and bacon to the table and they sat down together. Brought thus close to Lola's smallness, Joe seemed large, though his bigness had not been apparent while Hjalmar was in the room.

"I thought you'd forgotten all about it," she persisted, as Joe busied himself with the cakes.

"Well, I ain't had a chance to see you in a long time." He spread a pancake thickly with butter, quartered it, and thrust a quarter into his mouth, chewing hungrily. "Let's see—not since I was out here two years this summer. Well, you've got along good. Of course last year's crop was bum, but I unnerstan' yours was better'n most. This is a coming country, no mistake about that."

Lola was silent, her eyes on her food.

"I'll always be glad I advised Hank

to invest out here," Joe went on. "You've done better than you could of back in Minnesota."

"Yes, he's done well," Lola's voice was quiet, but with a perceptible emphasis on the pronoun.

Joe looked at her silently a moment, pausing in his eating. Then he spoke in a tone entirely new—hoarser, and roughly tender.

"Ain't you done well, Lola?"

She laid down her fork suddenly and faced him, her black eyes hot.

"Does it look like it?" she demanded.

She spread out her hand on the dingy oilcloth, and he saw that it was red and rough, the nails dirty and broken. He could not but notice the narrowness of her shoulders, the hollowness below her collarbones that stood out under the blue wrapper, the short, straight lines at the corners of her mouth.

"I'm sorry, Lola."

He reached over with plump fingers to stroke her red palm, but she drew it away.

Suddenly she rose and stepped to the window, holding the edge of the sash for a moment with both hands; then her shoulders rose with a long, gasping sob, and she plunged her head into the crook of her arm against the casing. Joe followed and stood beside her, patting her shoulder and smoothing it gently with his fingers.

"Don't cry, Lola; don't cry, little kid," he said over and over. Then he slid his arm about her and turned her toward him. She laid her head against his shoulder, still sobbing a little.

"Have you forgot how much I loved you?" he begged. She slid a hand up on the other shoulder. "Oh, you poor little kid. If I'd only made you marry me then, back in Minnesota, it 'ud a been better—for both o' us."

Suddenly his arm tightened around her, and with his free hand he forced up her chin until he could kiss her full on her wet lips. She lay heavy in his arms, gasping for breath, choking. "Don't, don't." Then she straightened and broke away.

"We mustn't do this," she said sadly,

colorlessly. She smoothed her hair, then began to clear the dishes from the table. Joe tried to follow her, to embrace her again, but she refused almost passively.

"Don't, Joe," she said. "We mustn't do this."

At last he drew on his gloves and went into the yard, where a large touring car stood in gleaming newness under the yellow sunlight.

As soon as he had closed the door Lola's steps slowed, and in a few moments she sank into a chair by the stove, crouching where she could watch him as he lifted the hood and leaned into the opening. Beyond the stable she could see the mile-long black field where her husband was drilling wheat and the "hand" following with the harrow. The wind was rising already, for a plume of gray dust followed each implement, trailing across the field. On beyond were other black fields, miles of them, clear to the skyline, broken here and there by the low square bulks of farmers' groves and by occasional slowly moving blurs that she knew to be other implements with their plumes of dust. Presently as the sun rose higher the wavering reflections of heat from the dry fields would rise into the presentation of unreality, and the world's edge would be clothed in shimmering water and studded by strangely gleaming towers.

She wondered whether or not Joe would come in the house again. Of course he would, for there was his coat on the chair. The dishes were washed and put away when he entered the room forty minutes later. But though he stood long by the stove, and adjusted his coat collar with utmost care, and stood long again by the door, he found no way to refer to what had happened, no way to come near to her or to touch her again.

III

"GOING to sell you a Hudson, Hank," Joe announced as his errand on the first of several visits made by the big car to the Johnson place between seed-time

and harvest. And indeed as the season advanced it seemed that Hjalmar Johnson might with reason be included in Zerny's list of prospects. Never had there been such an outlook for a crop in the history of the region. Week followed week of cool weather, with occasional showers and plenty of sunshine; and the wheat stooled, thickened and grew into solid masses of vivid green that filled the windy mirror at the sky's edge with wavering miles of living billows.

Often in the long forenoons Lola sat on the little stoop in the sunshine, her hands in her lap, watching the dance of light and the forms of its creation. Their first summer on the Slope she had sat there with needle in her fingers, working intricate patterns from a book, on tiny garments of flannel and sheer cotton. But too soon the tiny garments had been packed away in a trunk that was never opened.

Now she sat idle, filling the misty lands beyond the horizon with creatures of her dreams. She saw the towering buildings of cities, ladies with gowns and hats like those in the cheap magazine she took, men with clean-shaven faces, tailored clothes, fine motor-cars. Often her pulse would quicken and the red creep into her face at some vision unexpressed. As the summer advanced her cheeks and chest grew fuller, her body more supple, and a nervous beauty sprang up in her eyes.

One noon in July she was washing the dishes, hot and sweating in the stuffy kitchen. Hjalmar and the "hand" were repairing a binder in the yard. Suddenly she heard voices, and looking out saw Joe Zerny standing with her husband, his Palm Beach suit and the light checked cap on his curly brown head seeming immaculate beside Hjalmar's faded and grease-blackened overalls. Joe's car was in the yard, and Lola reflected admiringly that it had entered so silently that she had not heard it, though the kitchen door was open. She thought of the roaring clatter of their old Ford.

Joe was looking out across a field.

"Gosh, Hank," he was saying, "that's sure the best-lookin' barley I ever *did* see."

"Yes, it looks good," Hjalmar admitted, rising from the kneeling posture in which he had been working at an obstinate bolt, and looking out over the field to the north, where the green waves already showed a faint tinge of gold. He held the twisted-off head of the bolt in a monkey-wrench in his hand.

"It sure is the best in the whole neighborhood," Joe went on, "an' it's all good. An' your wheat, too—if you don't buy that Hudson this fall, Hank, it won't be account of money."

"Oh, I don't know about buying," said Hjalmar slowly.

"There's no car equal to it at any price, Hank, you know that, an'—" began Joe.

"Oh, I guess it's an all right car, Joe. I'd buy of you if I was figurin' on buyin' a high-priced car. But I ain't figurin' till the crop's thrashed, and I don't know then's I'll put money in a car."

Lola turned from the window. It would be good to have a Hudson, surely. Joe had told her that she could drive it herself. There would be other things to go with it. She knew that Joe would prolong his talk with her husband, and she found her feet taking her toward the stairs. It was a freshly washed and combed Lola, in her only light-colored gingham dress, with the collar loosely open, that came out to offer the men a pitcher of lemonade, half an hour later.

Hjalmar glanced at her with surprise as he drank off a cupful, while Joe eyed her with frank admiration. She stood near him, the wind blowing a wisp of black hair against her flushed cheek, her eyes brilliant, the pitcher balanced against her hip while she waited for the men to drink.

"Anything you want sent out from town, Lola?" Joe asked. "I'm going to send Hank some bolts. Always plenty chances there at the garriage to catch somebody that comes by here."

"I don't know," she hesitated. "I'll have to see."

He followed her to the house. "Gosh, you're pretty today, Lola," he said softly as he held the screen door open for her. She smiled but did not answer.

"Well, won't see you again for a while, I guess," he went on. "Going to drive to Fargo tomorrow. Got to be down there for a while. Better come and go along, Lola—just for the drive."

His voice was joking, but Lola stood tensely, her back toward him, and did not reply. Joe tried to relieve the situation.

"How long since you been to Fargo, Lola?"

"Not since we came out here." Her low voice trembled.

Joe stepped quickly toward her. "See here, Lola, I'm coming back here after harvest to sell some more cars, and I'll sell old Hank one or I'll bust." He hesitated, his face red. "I want you to have a good time or I'll—I'll—"

"Well?" She turned and looked up into his face, her eyes laughing, her lips pouting, eager.

"Damn you, kid—you—you—" He seized her roughly in his arms and pulled her against his body again and again, kissing her face and neck hungrily. Then, as if by conscious effort, he straightened his arms till they hung at his sides, and turned from her. He stumbled out the door, waved a hand to Hjalmar, and was gone. Lola stood in the middle of the room, her hands pressed against her cheeks, her body trembling.

IV

THAT evening a neighbor drove into the yard as they were at supper, and brought to the door the bolts for Hjalmar and a large parcel "for Mrs. Johnson."

Lola turned her back to the light and the table while she examined the handwriting in which her name was scrawled in two or three places. What

had Joe done now, she thought. She was conscious that her knees were trembling and her face was white.

"What's that?" demanded Hjalmar.

"Some things I ordered," she answered casually.

"What things?" he insisted. "Let's see."

"Oh, I don't know as I care to look at 'em *here*." She glanced at the "hand," dexterously eating beans with his knife, as though to explain her reluctance. But Hjalmar was frankly suspicious, whether of extravagance or something else she could not tell.

"Open it up," he commanded gruffly.

She shrugged her shoulders and in leisurely fashion untied the string. Inside the paper were, on top, two kitchen aprons, evidently as a concession to the deception. Underneath, were a pair of yellow silk hose and a cerise silk kimono with yellow flowers.

"What the hell is that?" Hjalmar demanded.

Lola spread it out admiringly on her arm, while the "hand" stared, ceasing to eat.

"What in hell you mean?" Hjalmar broke out. "Where'd you get the money? What you mean havin' Joe buy them things for you? Say, has that—by God—if—I'll—" He stopped, choked by the fury of a new suspicion.

"I took the bills Aunt Lottie sent me for my birthday. I sent a list. You got no call to go bellerin' at me so." She faced him steadily, raising her voice a trifle.

"Well—that's a dog of a way to spend it." He glowered at her doubtfully, then sank back into his chair and did not speak again that evening.

Lola could hardly steady herself to clear the table and wash the dishes. She dropped an ironstone cup on the floor, but it did not break. She could hardly think. Joe had come near making trouble for her. He had no business to do such a thing. But she smiled in the darkness of the stairway as she carried the bundle up to the bedroom. After she was sure that Hjalmar was asleep she crept out of bed, got from

her pocketbook the bills which her Aunt Lottie had sent, and hid them under a pile of winter night-gowns in a bureau drawer.

The next morning the mirage was brilliant down the long road that ran from the Johnsons' gate straight east for miles. She thought of Joe speeding along toward Fargo in his big, silent car. She fancied that the buildings of the city were about to rise into view from the perpetual shimmer. She imagined their appearance as one approached across the prairie, or as one passed them on the streets at night, seeing through the lighted windows men and women who passed and repassed in the business and pleasure of the world's life.

Soon came the intense activity of harvest and threshing. Though the threshers carried a cook-wagon, there were always extra hands to be fed during the harvest; and the necessity of Hjalmar's spending every available minute in the fields made him demand that Lola attend to the milking and the feeding of the stock in addition to her increased kitchen work. In the preceding years this season had been a fearful nightmare for Lola, from which she had emerged half dead for months in body and spirit.

But this year she with all the rest of the community was buoyed up by the excitement of a bumper crop. She found no time to sit in the hot upstairs room, clad only in her silk hose and kimono, as she had done a few times soon after she received them. She had altered the kimono to suit her stature, and had even worn the hose, unknown to Hjalmar, on one of their rare trips to town in the rickety Ford. But now, when she had time to think at all, she found herself growing ashamed of these things. Indeed, as she perceived the richness of the year's harvest, and in it a sign of the power of the man who had produced it, she felt her heart warming toward Hjalmar as it had not during the three years since their first on the Slope. She watched him moving among the harvesters, a giant

in stature and strength. As she lay beside him at night she would suddenly clasp his body with her hot arms, or rub his heavy, corded arms with nervous fingers. The threshers said that Hjalmar's grain was the best they had threshed, and Lola felt a pride in her big, silent man.

She began to picture the things that the crop might buy: improvements for the house, the kitchen—clothing for Hjalmar and herself—most of all, the new car. She alluded to these casually, even suggested a shopping trip to Fargo. But Hjalmar was hardly conscious of her wishes. A neighbor, long dissatisfied, was taking the opportunity afforded by a good crop to sell out and leave the region. Enoch Peterson would buy this neighbor's home quarter-section for his eldest son, about to be married. But there was an eighty adjoining Hjalmar's farm which the Petersons did not want. So Hjalmar explained the matter to Lola and the "hand" one evening at supper, talking intermittently between mouthfuls of stewed beef and potatoes. It was extra good land, never too wet, easy to work with his own west eighty. The neighbour held it at seventy-five dollars an acre. But for half cash and the balance on contract he believed it could be had for fifty-five or fifty-six hundred.

"How much will our crop bring in?" Lola inquired anxiously.

"I figure it'll clear me close to three thousand dollars after the notes are paid," Hjalmar announced rather proudly.

Lola asked no more questions. That night she lay awake, turning restlessly from side to side, figuring the matter over and over in her mind. She saw that if Hjalmar bought the land there would be no money left for a new car—indeed, for anything else. Her dreams of pleasures and little luxuries assumed a burning and maddening brightness as she realized the likelihood of their futility. Hjalmar didn't need the land—he was too busy as it was. And anyway hadn't she anything com-

ing to her from the crop? Hadn't she worked hard enough—done her share all along? She could have pounded the big bulk of the sleeping man by her side with her tightly clenched, hot fists. She wanted to love him—she wanted to be a good woman. She saw a quarrel about the car rising hideously between her and the newly regained affection for her husband. She would talk to him in the morning—he must listen to her—he must not buy the land. But still she lay awake a long time, her eyes wide, her body uneasy.

V

THE next morning she hurried to clear the table so that she could go out to the stable and talk to Hjalmar before he started to the field, where the plowing had begun. There was no chance at breakfast, with the "hand" around, and before breakfast Hjalmar always seemed so cold and gruff. As she was putting wood in the stove to heat dish-water, just before going out, she heard the noise of the Ford. Hjalmar was backing it out of the shed and turning toward the road. She ran out and called after him, but he did not turn his head. The hired man came shambling out of the stable.

"Where's he going?" she demanded.

He stared at her stupidly. "Bane going see Roberts; bane going buy eighty off him."

With a sharp cry she hid her face in her arm and ran back in the house. He would tell the man and not tell her, would he; he would buy that land and spend all they had made for two years without so much as asking her opinion, would he? She—she would show him.

A few minutes later the telephone rang, three long peals followed by one shorter—their ring; when Lola answered she heard Hjalmar's voice.

"Get ready to go to town with us to sign them contracts," he told her. "We'll be along in a few minutes."

She slammed the receiver on the hook without replying, then leaned against

the wall beside the telephone, choking with bitterness.

Presently the Ford came to a roaring stop in the yard and the horn barked hoarsely two or three times, the rattling engine still running. She did not answer or go to the door, but crouched in the chair by the hissing tea kettle, with lowered head. In a moment the stoop creaked under Hjalmar's weight, and he entered.

"Come on. What's the matter with you?" he demanded hotly.

"I ain't going with you." Her voice was thick with rage.

He stepped beside her and thrust a hand under her chin. "I guess you're mad," he bullied her. "You think you'll scare me out o' buyin' that eighty."

She sprang up, her face drawn and white, her eyes blazing, her fists clenched.

"Damn you, don't you touch me!" she screamed.

Hjalmar's face burned red, slowly; his eyes brightened and the muscles of his face contorted. "Don't you get sassy now."

He spoke with measured inflection, his voice low and trembling.

"Don't you think you block this deal, either. We'll fix that all right. We'll just fix up the papers and bring 'em out here for you to sign. But don't you get sassy to me now. Do you hear?" He half raised a huge red fist.

Lola glared at him, then turned suddenly to her dish-pan. Hjalmar swung on his heel and went out. The Ford started noisily, then passed swiftly out of hearing. Lola flung herself on the floor in an agony of choking sobs. "Oh, damn him, damn him" she whispered. She clutched her upper arms, sinking her fingers into the muscles, and rolled back and forth, sobbing in shaking gasps. For perhaps twenty minutes she lay so, gradually quieting and then crying out in a sudden renewal of fury. Then suddenly she heard a step at the door, a rap, and Joe Zerny turned the knob and entered.

"Come to sell Hank that—" he began

as he entered; then, as he crossed swiftly to her, "Why, Lola—Lola—what's this?"

She hid her face from him, but he raised her and held her against him, patting her hair, caressing her shoulders.

"Poor little kid—poor, poor little kid. Tell me what's up."

Her sobs broke out again, but gradually grew quiet. She became aware of the perfume from the handkerchief in his breast pocket under her cheek—of the jade cravat pin on a level with her eyes—of his clean cuffs and smoothly shaven face.

"Tell me what's up, kid," he urged. "Did old Hank—?"

"He's going to buy an eighty," she whispered. "He don't care about me—he makes me hate him."

"The old skunk! Here I was leaving him till the last one so I'd have a string of sales to show him—he promised he'd buy of me—the old skunk." There was frank regret in Joe's voice.

She leaned closer against him. "I liked them things, Joe," she told him.

"Did you, kid?" A sudden glow passed through him. He hugged her tightly. "I was afraid you wouldn't—or it would make trouble for you. I was scared after I sent 'em. Would of got 'em back if I could of found the guy before he left town. Worried about it all the way to Fargo. Have you tried 'em on—worn 'em? Say, kid—"

He held her close for a moment, then crossed to the window and looked out.

"Well, Joe?"

He turned and looked at her. She stood partly turned away from him, her head down, her hands pressing her skirt against her thighs. He crossed to her in long steps and seized her as he had once before, pulling her body against his in a powerful grasp. She threw back her head and offered him her lips.

"Kid! Kid!" he choked, kissing her madly. Suddenly he held her at arms' length.

"Say, kid," he began, "come and go

with me. This is a hell of a place for you. I've had an awful good string of luck—best in my life. My commissions 'll run over eight thousand dollars for the year. We'll spend the winter in Chicago—maybe in New York—see some real life. I want you, kid. Then I'll get a job in the East somewhere—I'll treat you square—will you come?"

For an instant her eyes blazed up into his, searching his hot face. His eyes wavered, but she was looking away at the unwashed dishes, the untidy room.

"I'll get my clothes," she said, kissed him lightly, and was gone.

VI

LOLA prepared a lunch while Joe filled the gasoline tank of his car from Hjalmar's supply barrel. He explained nervously that it might be better not to have to stop on the way to Fargo. She buttered bread thickly and laid cold sliced pork between the pieces; then she took half a cake, left from the day before.

As they flew down the long, straight roads of the Trail through the sunny day, her thoughts ran a riot of delight. The speed and easy motion of the car, the softness of the cushions, the glittering fittings, fascinated her. The farms and towns, the yellow cottonwood groves and brown fringes of woodland along the streams, charmed her with their variety and color. But chiefly she was thrilled by the attraction of the man beside her. His mastery of the machine seemed perfect. He explained that they would be a hundred miles away before Hjalmar would get home—assured her that they had nothing to fear, he would manage all that. He believed himself, for he was profoundly conscious of the beauty which the excitement brought out in her whole being, and immensely pleased by the sense of possessing her. They were in the full power of mutual physical attraction, and there was keen joy in the mere chance touch of their elbows or knees.

About five o'clock they stopped at a farmhouse for water. An old woman peered out of the window of the bare little house, and Lola noticed her with a sudden feeling of pity and disgust. A little later they stopped by the roadside and ate their lunch.

From this time on, the long drive in the wind, following the violent discharge of passion in the morning, began to tire them both. Joe's driving became unconsciously slower, and Lola fell asleep repeatedly, leaning lightly on his shoulder. It was after midnight when they sped past the white city of the State Fair grounds and raced down a long boulevard between sleeping houses to the center of Fargo. In Broadway and Front Street little groups of people were still hurrying from one to another of the brightly lighted restaurants. Joe drew up at a doorway marked "Furnished Rooms," between two pawnshops. He hurried her up a long stairway and switched on the lights in a stuffy, gaudily furnished room. "Here's where I've been hanging out," he said. Then he left her while he took the car to the garage.

VII

THE next morning Lola found herself awake, as usual, on the farm, before it was fully light. At last, when it had been fully light for some time, she crept out of bed, wrapped herself in the kimono, and crouched in a rocking-chair at the window by the bronzed radiator, which was beginning to crack and hiss. Across the street was a poultry-buying and killing establishment. Three negroes were lounging in the sunlight against the railing in front of it. Lola looked at their battered, brutal faces with curiosity. She had seen very few negroes in her life. Below her on the sidewalk men in duck jackets, or corduroy vests over flannel shirts, passed back and forth or gathered in knots of three or four.

Suddenly a door directly under her flew open and vomited a half-dozen dirty, swarthy children, followed by a

stout, greasy man carrying a chair. He placed the chair against the opened door and sat down. She could see his black hair and the greasy dust on his shoulders. The children began a desultory playing about the door and on the sidewalk. One tiny boy, in a red sweater much too large for him, picked up a small whisky flask from the gutter. Instantly the two larger boys snatched it from him and began tussling over it, while the discoverer set up a piercing wail.

Joe Zerny awoke with a start.

"Why didn't you call me, if you're awake?" he demanded.

"Why, I thought you were tired, Joe."

"Gosh, Lola, didn't I tell you I had a week's work to do today? We can't lay around here forever. I got to collect what's owing me and get it into currency, so we can hike."

"Why, you said we needn't worry about anything, Joe."

"Well, how do I know that geek won't take it into his head to follow us up? He'd know we'd have to come here."

Joe dressed rapidly. "Won't take time to shave this morning," he remarked, rubbing his chin before the mirror. He kissed her hurriedly as he started out. "Now, kid, you better sit tight here," he enjoined her. "I'll bring you a lunch as soon as I c'n get around to it."

She sat for a while by the radiator, then rose, and stepped to the dresser to comb her hair. As she lay down the comb she glanced at the confused mass of linen, ties and socks in the drawer of the dresser, which Joe had left open. She warmed with a little smile as she thought that she would keep such things in order for Joe, now. The tattered toes of one pair of socks protruded from a newspaper in which they had been wrapped. She thought idly of how she would darn and mend such things for him, and how he would praise her neatness; though, of course, she wouldn't need to—he could afford always to buy new ones. She fingered the soiled toes

projecting from the newspaper, then pulled at them. As she did so they seemed to leap out at her, and swiftly unrolled to their full length.

They were women's silk hose, striped black, white and green, and very much soiled and worn—evidently discarded. At first Lola stared at them stupidly. Then as she realized what they meant or might mean she threw them violently on the floor. Turning she walked unsteadily to the chair by the radiator. She had not thought before of the other women who might have entered Joe's life since he had half-heartedly made love to her back in the Minnesota village, before he had gone to the city and she had married Hjalmar Johnson. She had known that he had never married. She had not thought of anything else.

Perhaps it had been a long while ago, she thought. She crossed to the dresser again and spread out the paper. It was dated only a few weeks before, evidently just before Joe had left Fargo for the fall selling. A sudden flame of jealousy swept over her, leaving an acute physical sickness. She staggered back to the chair and sank into it.

Sparrows were fighting in the gutters below the windows. A hunched old man, sweeping the street, pushed a rattling iron cart a few feet at a time, stopping to pull a little manure on his shovel with a broad black broom. The windows of the room were closed, but a disagreeable smell from a restaurant a door or so away reached her from time to time. A block to the north a switch engine was fouling the air with clouds of black smoke as it shuttled back and forth. Beyond were the tall black stacks of a mill. Lola found herself thinking of the sunlight on the stoop and in the yard, the clean brown fields of stubble as she had seen them the morning before, almost with regret. "That's a funny way to feel," she told herself without mirth. She could not see the wavering horizon here.

An hour passed, two hours, and still Joe did not come. She wondered if he had forgotten that she had had no

breakfast. She got a piece of the cake left from their lunch and tried to eat it, but it seemed only to renew her sickness. She thirsted for fresh air, and pulled open a window. But the cold, smoky draught that entered made her shiver, and she shut it again almost at once. The striped stockings lay like a poisonous snake on the floor. She walked into the bathroom. From its window she looked out directly on the platform of a fire-escape—a rickety ladder of rusted iron stretching steeply down into a back-yard littered with boxes and garbage from the restaurant. She returned to the front window, but did not finish combing her hair.

VIII

AFTER two more hours of waiting her uneasiness had mounted to terror. Noon had come and passed, and the rough-clad men were issuing from the lunch-rooms along the street, smoking or picking their teeth. She fancied that they were congregating beneath her window and drew back to peer through the dirty curtains of cheap lace.

Suddenly the door at the foot of the stairs burst open and someone came bounding up. She turned toward the door in relief. But instead of entering her room the steps turned into the door opposite, across the little landing which she had glimpsed as Joe was leaving.

"Gee," the newcomer shouted in an explosive voice, evidently standing in the doorway of the room, "ain't you heard the news?"

"No—what?" someone replied.

"Joe Zerny's killed—just an hour ago." Lola listened in a stupor of silence. "By an old guy from up state," the voice went on. "Claimed Joe had run off with his wife. Hit him in the temple with a hammer—just one smash—I seen them taking Joe to the morgue."

"Did they get the guy?"

"Sure. He didn't make no fight. Never told what he done it for till after they had him. Just walked up to Joe and give him one lick. Gee, he's a big

old guy. They got him right there in the office of the garriage where he done it."

The two men clattered down the stairs. Lola sat bowed by the window, dazed. Things seemed uncertain and blurred about her. She felt the sickness coming again, mounting to her head. She could not think. She was aroused by sounds from below. A crowd was gathering now, certainly. She saw policemen getting out of a wagon a few doors away and hurrying in her direction. A sudden desperation filled her, and she rose, fighting the dizziness which assailed her. She drew on the long coat which she had worn the day before and snapped shut her suitcase. She had only the vaguest idea of what might be done to her; but she could not face the crowd—she could not face Hjalmar—she would not.

Steps were coming up the stairs, rapidly. She ran into the bathroom, carrying the suitcase, and locked the door behind her. She pushed up the window, frantically thrust out the screen, dropped her suitcase on the fire-escape, and stepping on the edge of the tub crawled out after it. She could hear pounding and angry voices at the door. Below only a block away slept the green mirror of the river. She felt dimly that if she could get to Minnesota she would be safe.

Suddenly a policeman came in sight around a building some distance down the block, and blew his whistle. A dimness encircled Lola. The acute sickness swept over her and filled her with a terrible sense of final impotence. She felt her suitcase slipping from her fingers, then herself falling after it down the iron ladder.

Her body lay crumpled together on the bottom steps, face and hands doubled under and hidden. Blood ran down her unbound black hair and trickled on the tumbled garments in the suitcase, broken open in the dust below. One leg was thrust backward between steps of the ladder, in its yellow silk stocking and unlaced shoe.



At The Zoo

By Charles G. Shaw

YESTERDAY I visited the zoo and gazed upon the unhappy creatures within the cages.

I felt strangely touched by the look of hopelessness in their eyes, the realization of their monotonous existences. It all seemed so futile.

Today I visited a great bank and gazed upon the unhappy creatures within the cages.

I felt strangely touched . . .



Fable of the Wise Man

By M. G. Sabel

THE two silly young girls
Began to giggle,
Interspersing knowing glances at each other.
The very learned, wise and erudite old man
Felt foolish;
So he went home and burned up his complete library.



LOVE and marriage are both elastic. But love stretches into the past and marriage into the future.



PROHIBITION has simply diminished the gulf that used to exist between lacquer and liquor.



Portrait of a Theatrical Season

By George Jean Nathan

I

IN a book on "The Popular Theatre," published five or six years ago, I included a chapter devoted to describing a typical season in the Broadway play-houses. The record was presented literally; there was no particular attempt at criticism; the chronicle sought rather to set down briefly, and—the hope was—illuminatingly, what were the gospel adventures of the eye, ear and basic upholstery in the theatres of New York during the stipulated period. Since I have received no requests to repeat the idea, I take the liberty of doing so. For somehow I believe that such a chronicle has a vivid Expressionism value than the usual sort of survey of the theatrical season lacks. Departing from the accepted standards of criticism—being, in fact, not criticism at all—it yet provides the most realistic form of criticism. I catalogue the plays in the order in which I saw them. They comprise, in toto, what will be known to history as the American dramatic season of 1921—1922. All ready, professor!

II

"The Skylark," by Thomas Robinson.—A play in which the rôle of the foolish little butterfly flapper of a wife, frequently alluded to by the other actors in the company as a cutie, was played by an actress who (*vide* "Who's Who on the Stage," Vol. I. 1908) was born in 1878, and whose professional début (*vide ditto*) "was made in the chorus of a musical play soon after the Galveston flood."

"The Teaser," by the Mesdames

Matthews and Stanley.—The kind of play in which a young woman, fully dressed and carrying a fan, hides momentarily in a man's bedroom and, upon being detected, is thereupon lugubriously declared ruined for the rest of her life.

"Getting Gertie's Garter," by Avery Hopwood and Wilson Collison.—The customary smutty farce in which seventy-eight double ententes, one hundred and six left-handed expressions, one hundred and forty circumlocutions and an equal number of synonyms are laboriously employed to evade the direct use of the word fornication.

"Honors Are Even," by Roi Cooper Megrue.—A play about a brilliant, witty, cynical philosopher-playwright, with brilliant, witty, cynical philosophies by the author of "Under Cover," "Under Fire," etc.

"Tangerine," a musical comedy.—A libretto enthusiastically hailed by the newspaper reviewers as satire on the theory that satire is anything wherein a playwright in Act II places in the mouths of the women the Act I animadversions of the men.

"March Hares," by Harry Gribble.—A witty and genuinely entertaining comedy in the Wilde manner. The "Crome Yellow" of the theatrical season. Worth the evening.

"Dulcy," by G. S. Kaufman and Marc Connelly.—One very amusing comedy scene and two well-drawn characters embroidered with considerable hokum. Agreeable light entertainment hailed by the authors' newspaper cronies as worthy of Molière.

"Sonya," an adaptation from the Polish.—A play of Kings, Crown

Princes, Royal Chancellors and Dukes, acted by members of the Lambs' Club.

"Sonny," by George V. Hobart.—By George V. Hobart.

"The Night Cap," by Max Marcin and Guy Bolton.—"The Bat" minus the money.

"Nobody's Money," by William Le Baron.—A dull farce leading up to a weak paraphrase of the chief situation in "Turn to the Right."

"The Scarlet Man," by William Le Baron.—The play in which the young girl defiantly declares at the curtain of Act I that she is that very night going to the apartment of the gay bachelor to do the worst, and in which she is disclosed throughout Act II sitting in an arm-chair in front of the bachelor's grate-fire alternately looking at *Vogue* and saying no.

"Put and Take," a negro music show.—A musical comedy that was white in all essentials but the faces (and feet) of the performers.

"The Mask of Hamlet," by I forget whom.—Financed by a local Italian Gesangverein as propaganda for something or other that was still not divulged by 9:25 p.m., the time of my departure to confer with Bishop Manning on the life history and parasitism of *Eocronartium muscicola*.

"The Detour," by Owen Davis.—Hailed by the reviewers as a very good play on the ground that, though it would have been a very bad play had it been written by any one else, it was such a great improvement upon all the other very poor plays that Owen Davis had written.

"The Triumph of X," by Carl Wupperman.—A drama directed against the evils of drinking. An ominous warning by Mr. Lee Shubert.

"Six-Cylinder Love," by W. A. McGuire.—An amusing George M. Cohan play not written by George M. Cohan.

"Personality," by J. E. Brady and Philip Bartholomae.—William A. Brady, whose production of "The Teaser" marked a new era in American staging, here outdoes Reinhardt's greatest tri-

umph at the Grosses Schauspielhaus. Nevertheless, departed at 9:08 to confer with Bishop Manning on the documents in Swiss archives relating to emigration to the American colonies in the eighteenth century.

"The Poppy God," by T. G. Springer, et al.—An elaborately staged Chinese opus planned and designed to furnish Mr. Edgar Selwyn's apartment.

"Two Blocks Away," by Aaron Hoffman.—Yiddo-Broadway folk drama.

"Daddy's Gone A-Hunting," by Zoë Akins.—The Viennese atmosphere in St. Louis, Mo.

"Back Pay," by Fannie Hurst.—Version XXII of "The Easiest Way."

"The Wheel," by Winchell Smith.—A wife whose husband is an inveterate gambler secretly buys the gambling house and wins all the money that her husband and Smith and Golden lose.

"Swords," by Sidney Howard.—Miss Clare Eames rises to new heights in the columns of the *Times*. Mr. Brock Pemberton, the producer, sells his Ford.

"Tarzan of the Apes," by Edgar Burroughs.—*Munsey's Magazine* clap-trap. Departed at 9:22 to confer with Bishop Manning on the formation of nitrates in a soil following the growth of red clover and timothy.

Hippodrome.—Elephants, prima donnas and other large animals. The circus without the smell.

"Don Juan," by Henri Bataille.—Lou Tellegen with a Gus Rogers accent and dressed like Elsie Leslie in "Little Lord Fauntleroy" makes mock of an interesting play.

"The Silver Fox," by Cosmo Hamilton.—The risqué Hungarian "Blue Fox" with salt on its tail.

"The Merry Widow."—A revival of the excellent operetta with an actor in Donald Brian's old rôle. Worth the evening.

"The Hero," by Emery Pottle.—A revival of an intelligent and well-written American comedy drama. Worth the evening.

"The Easiest Way," by Eugene Walter.—When originally produced, I was one of the many who hailed the

play as an important piece of playwriting. Time teaches us all many things.

"*Bluebeard's Eighth Wife*," by Alfred Savoir.—A risqué French farce adapted by C. Andrews, a teacher in the Stuyvesant High School.

"*The Elton Case*," by William Devereux.—The Elwell murder case murdered.

"*The Circle*," by W. Somerset Maugham.—An exceptionally witty and engaging sardonic comedy, in the main well acted. Worth the evening.

"*Only 38*," by A. E. Thomas.—A *Woman's Home Companion* story dramatized in terms of *Modern Priscilla* for readers of the *Ladies' Home Journal*.

"*The Blue Lagoon*," by H. DeVere Stacpoole.—The boy and girl brought up on the deserted island who learn the secrets of sex from the birds, the bees and the flowers. In bed at 9:45.

"*The White-Headed Boy*," by Lennox Robinson.—An excellent comedy by the best of the younger Irish dramatists. Worth the evening.

"*True to Form*," by Augustin McHugh.—An attempt at a Shaw play by the author of a Broadway crook play.

"*Launcelot and Elaine*," by Edwin Milton Royle.—A violently poetic opus produced by the author.

"*Blood and Sand*," by Thomas Cushing.—A dramatization of Blasco Ibañez's Middle West best-seller, with Mr. Otis Skinner (ætat 64) as the dashing, passionate young bull-fighter.

"*The Return of Peter Grimm*," by David Belasco.—A revival of the late Mr. Louis V. De Foe's favourite masterpiece.

"*The Music Box Revue*."—An amusing girl and tune show, with two good burlesques. Worth the evening.

"*The Man in the Making*," by John W. Elliott.—*American Magazine* uplift stuff. Left at 9:35 to confer with Bishop Manning on the report of the New York State Potato Association's potato inspection work for 1921.

"*Wait Till We're Married*," by Hilliard Booth.—A small-time farce. In bed at 9:45.

"*The Spring*," by George Cram Cook.—A sincere, but eminently unsuccessful, effort to write a good play.

"*Blossom Time*," a musical comedy.—Schubert's melodies and thick ankles.

"*Pot Luck*," by Edward Childs Carpenter.—More crooks.

"*Beware of Dogs*," by William Hodge.—William Hodge, the actor, still desperately trying to prove that he is a playwright.

"*Bombo*," a music show.—Al Jolson, one of the best of the black-face comedians, versus Harold Atteridge, one of the poorest of the white-face librettists.

"*The Love Letter*," a musical comedy.—An overdose of Dillingham "politeness."

"*Like a King*," by John Hunter Booth.—Mr. Adolph Klauber tries to produce a Winchell Smith play without getting Winchell Smith to write it. Mr. Klauber for the sixteen years that he was the dramatic critic of the *New York Times*, it will be recalled, fought ceaselessly for revivals of Shakespeare.

"*Thank You*," by Winchell Smith and Thomas Cushing.—The same old money-making Winchell Smith play with the hand-me-down beginning and Wetzel finish.

"*The Fan*," by de Caillavet and de Flers.—A witty comedy by the eminent collaborators, acted out of all of its values.

"*Lilies of the Field*," by William Hurlbut.—Avery Hopwood's "Gold Diggers," second edition.

"*Main Street*," by Ford and O'Higgins.—The Sinclair novel with all the things that made the novel dexterously left out.

"*The O'Brien Girl*," a music show.—A George M. Cohan dancing tournament with the customary deification of the Irish and the customary Cohan vintage chorus girls.

"*The Wren*," by Booth Tarkington.—Another of a good novelist's poor plays.

"*The Children's Tragedy*," by Karl Schönherr.—A fine play put on by Mr. Arnold Daly for the love of the thing.

Despite incompetent acting, worth the evening.

"*A Bill of Divorcement*," by *Clemence Dane*.—A moderately interesting contrast of modern youth and its elders, with a divorce setting. If this is the great play that I am told it is, I here-with hand in my resignation as a dramatic critic.

"*Love Dreams*," a musical comedy.—I couldn't hear any of it. My seat in this theatre is directly behind that of the critic for the *Sun* who is given to a devouring appetite for caramels in very crackly paper.

"*Ambush*," by *Arthur Richman*.—An observant, intelligent and faithful play. Worth the evening.

"*The Claw*," by *Henri Bernstein*.—The conventional Théâtre du Gymnase acrobatics, devoid of merit.

"*A Bachelor's Night*," by *Wilson Collison*.—A coal-heaver attempt at risqué farce. Departed at 9:35 to confer with Bishop Manning on the operative treatment for the disabilities and deformities following anterior poliomyelitis as practised at the Hospital for Ruptured and Crippled.

"*The Demi-Virgin*," by *Avery Hopwood*.—Vide "Getting Gertie's Garter."

"*The Right to Strike*," by *E. Hutchinson*.—A Manchester Brieux propaganda play. In bed at 9:50 p.m.

"*The Six-Fifty*," by *Kate McLaurin*.—The lonely farm wife longing for romance. In bed at 10 p.m.

"*The Grand Duke*," by *Sacha Guitry*.—Delicately humorous boulevard farce-comedy. Worth the evening.

"*The Wandering Jew*," by *E. Temple Thurston*.—An attempt to get the Hebrew trade with Biblical, legendary and historical material. Back to "Potash and Perlmutter"!

"*Golden Days*," by *Sidney Toler*.—Dull sweet stuff. Spent Acts II and III in the lobby discussing Art with Mr. A. H. Woods.

"*Anna Christie*," by *Eugene O'Neill*.—A good play by the foremost American dramatist. Worth the evening.

"*The Straw*," by *Eugene O'Neill*.—An admirably written, moving play. Worth the evening.

"*The Intimate Strangers*," by *Booth Tarkington*.—A fairly diverting mixture of Barrie, Clare Kummer, the Pinero of "Preserving Mr. Panmure," and Judge Shute.

"*The Perfect Fool*," a music show.—When Ed. Wynn was on the stage, funny. When Ed Wynn was not on the stage, sad.

"*The Skirt*," by *Maude Fulton*.—In bed at 9:45.

"*The Mad Dog*," by *George Scarborough*.—By George Scarborough.

"*We Girls*," by the *Hattons*.—By the Hattons.

"*The Great Way*," by *Horace Fish*.—"The Fall and Rise of Susan Lenox" played in front of canvas painted to look Spanish. Mantillas, castanets, passion, and mush.

"*Nature's Nobleman*," by *Samuel Shipman and Clara Lipman*.—Louis Mann enjoys himself again. In bed at 10 p.m.

"*The Title*," by *Arnold Bennett*.—A talented writer's worst.

"*The Man's Name*," by *Marjorie Chase and Eugene Walter*.—"Strong" drama. Departed at 10:10 p.m. to confer with Bishop Manning on the relative advantages of the use of sodium and potassium hydroxides in the preparation of alkaline pyrogallol.

"*The Great Broxopp*," by *A. A. Milne*.—Forced farce-comedy that wore itself out by the middle of Act II.

"*Everyday*," by *Rachel Crothers*.—A potboiler presented with the solemn air of a great master-work.

"*The Ziegfeld Midnight Frolic*."—Girls, tunes and pocket flasks.

"*Marie Antoinette*," by *Margaret Mayo and Aubrey Kennedy*.—The guillotining of Margaret Mayo and Aubrey Kennedy.

"*The Dream Maker*," by *William Gillette*.—More crooks.

"*Suzette*," a music show.—In bed at 9:05.

"*Her Salary Man*," by *I've Lost The Program*.—A *Saturday Evening Post*

story that the *Saturday Evening Post* rejected.

"*The Wife With a Smile*," by Denys and Amiel.—A comedy that would have been more interesting had the authors never read O. Henry.

"*Kiki*," by André Picard.—An American adaptation in which a French chorus girl lives platonically with a theatrical manager.

"*The Varying Shore*," by Zoë Akins.—Sudermann's Lily Czepanék in a Bendel gown and with \$10,000 in her stocking.

"*The Fair Circassian*," by Gladys Unger.—Peg o' My Heart in a Turkish costume.

"*Alias Jimmy Valentine*," by Paul Armstrong.—A revival. More crooks.

"*The Hand of the Potter*," by Theodore Dreiser.—An half good, half bad, pathological study in degeneracy.

"*Bought and Paid For*," by George Broadhurst.—Ten years ago, the New York newspaper reviewers enthusiastically called this "the play of the century." They did not specify the century.

"*The Mountain Man*," by Clare Kummer.—A clever playwright's off day.

"*The Idle Inn*," by Peretz Hirshbein.—Ben Ami rises to new heights in the columns of the *Times*. In bed at 10:30.

"*Danger*," by Cosmo Hamilton.—A very indignant propaganda drama directed against Lesbians. Left at 10:05 to confer with Bishop Manning on wharves and piers, their design, construction and equipment.

"*The Dover Road*," by A. A. Milne.—An agreeable light comedy of amour. Worth the evening.

"*The Married Woman*," by C. B. Fernald.—Dull pseudo-Shavian badinage.

"*The White Peacock*," by Madame Petrova.—Very passionate Valeska Suratt drama.

"*The Squaw Man*," by Edwin Milton Royle.—Faversham, in Hess' Sunburn Make-Up No. 7, again marries the squaw.

"*Face Value*," by Sabatino Lopez.—Ditrichstein again enjoys himself out-

wooning all the other actors in the cast. "*Bull-Dog Drummond*," by "Sapper."—More crooks.

"*Captain Applejack*," by Walter Hackett.—More crooks.

"*Lawful Larceny*," by Samuel Shipman.—By Samuel Shipman.

"*The Steamship Tenacity*," by Charles Vildrac.—An intelligent and interesting play ruined by a miserable presentation.

"*Drifting*," by Colton and Andrews.—Alice Brady rescued from the villainous supers by Robert Warwick. Locale: China.

"*Up in the Clouds*," a music show.—In bed at 10:15.

Fritz Leiber in *Shakespearian repertoire*.—The best of the American Shakespearian actors. Worth the evenings.

"*He Who Gets Slapped*," by Andreyev.—Muddled drama by a notable dramatist, written in his muddled years.

"*The Blue Kitten*," a music show.—Good pastime.

"*Elsie Janis and Her Gang*," a music show.—Poor pastime.

"*The National Anthem*," by J. Hartley Manners.—Mr. Manners becomes very much worked up over the immorality of jazz dancing. The first-night audience applauds him noisily and then rushes off en masse to Montmartre, Ted Lewis' Club, the Palais Royal and Reisenweber's.

"*Marjolaine*," a musical comedy.—A pleasant score by Hugo Felix.

"*Pins and Needles*," a music show.—A seedy London revue with the deadly Harry Pilcer at stage centre. In the open at 10:05.

"*The Nest*," by Paul Géraldy.—A well-written and reticent play on a theme that might readily have been sentimentalized out of all merit. Worth the evening.

"*The Czarina*," by Lengyel and Biro.—A thoroughly amusing account of the piggeries of Catherine of Russia. Worth the evening.

"*The Voice from the Minaret*," by Robert Hichens.—The young ecclesiastic again falls for the perfumed hussy,

finding his soul, as per schedule, an hour after I have gone home.

"*Frank Fay's Fables*," a music show.
—In bed at 9:45.

"*Chauve Souris*," Russian vaudeville.
—B. F. Keithovitch.

"*The Law Breaker*," by Jules E. Goodman.—More crooks.

"*The Cat and the Canary*," by John Willard.—Quiver hokum.

"*Fedora*," by Victorien Sardou.—Left at 9:20 to confer with Bishop Manning on the mechanism of the anaphylaxis reaction in the rabbit.

"*Montmartre*," by Pierre Frondaie.—Sweet little Marie-Claire feels in her heart the call of her beloved Montmartre and—what are mere riches and such dross?—takes off her \$8,000 dress, puts on the old \$12 one, and goes back.

"*Desert Sands*," by Wilson Collison.—Sheikismus. In bed at 9:40.

"*Madame Pierre*," by Eugene Brieux.—A translation of "*Les Hanneçons*," one of the best of modern comedies. Worth the evening.

"*The Rubicon*," by Edouard Bourdet.—A notorious boulevard farce-comedy with many of the funniest lines carefully deleted.

"*To the Ladies!*," by Kaufman and Connelly.—One excellent scene surrounded by a more or less conventional comedy. Hailed by the authors' newspapers cronies as worthy of Shakespeare.

"*The French Doll*," by Armont and Gerbidon.—The admirable Bordoni in an originally perfectly clean French farce-comedy which, according to the newspaper reviewers, "was prudently adapted and purified for the American stage."

"*For Goodness Sake*," a music show.—Adele Astaire and Charles Judels worth the evening.

"*Mrs. Warren's Profession*," by George Bernard Shaw.—A relighting of an exploded bomb.

"*Bavu*," by Earl Carroll.—Melodrama that failed to mel. In bed at 10 p.m.

"*Your Woman and Mine*," by Cleves Kinkaid.—The noble and upright

young Governor, the political plotters, the stain upon a young woman's fair name, the room in the State Capitol with the usual oil painting of Cyril Maude over the mantelpiece.

"*Back to Methuselah*," by George Bernard Shaw.—Perpetual motion dramatized.

"*The First Man*," by Eugene O'Neill.—O'Neill puts on Strindberg's whiskers.

"*Madeleine and the Movies*," by George M. Cohan.—Seven Keys To De Mille.

"*Up the Ladder*," by Owen Davis.—By Owen Davis.

"*Broken Branches*," by Nyitray and Winslow.—In bed at 9:15 p.m.

"*The Hairy Ape*," by Eugene O'Neill.—An interesting amalgam of the old realism and the new expressionism. Worth the evening.

"*The Truth About Blayds*," by A. A. Milne.—An ironic comedy that begins brilliantly and ends tamely.

"*The First Fifty Years*," by Henry Myers.—Miss Clare Eames rises to still greater heights in the columns of the *Times*, and the management of the Princess Theatre begins to look around for a new attraction.

"*The Hotel Mouse*," a musical comedy.—The adaptation from the French in which the bachelor finds the pretty girl in his bed and therefore tiptoes quietly out of the room and goes to sleep in the arm-chair.

"*Voltaire*," by Gertrude Purcell and Leila Taylor.—"Flappers and Philosophers."

"*The Hindu*," by Gordon Kean and *Someone Else*.—Quiver hokum.

"*Just Because*," a musical comedy.—Departed at 9:26 sharp to confer with Bishop Manning on the botany, history and evolution of the gladiolus.

"*Letty Pepper*," a music show.—A dismal exhibition involving Miss Charlotte Greenwood, a melancholy clown. Jokes by George V. Hobart.

"*Make It Snappy*," a music show.—Eddie Cantor, a good "in one" comedian, spreads himself over a full stage.

"*Hopper's Funmakers*," a music

show.—An archeological exhibition presenting De Wolf Hopper, Jefferson De Angelis, John E. Henshaw and a number of other extinct comedians. A lugubrious effort on the part of a quota of jobless members of the Lambs' Club to produce a show by themselves and to prove to the world that Ziegfeld, Dillingham, the Shuberts and the other managers ought to go back to the button-hole business. Due to collusion between the public and the managers in question, the show was forced to close almost as soon as it opened.

"The Goldfish," by Gladys Unger.—Several years ago there was produced in Paris a farce by Armont and Gerbidon called "L'Ecole des Cocottes" that made a great hit because of its clever naughtiness. "The Goldfish" is an adaptation of this farce that made a great hit because of its clever naughtiness, with the clever naughtiness entirely deleted.

"Lady Bug," by Frances Nordstrom.—An attempt to treat some of the current fads farcically. In bed and asleep again at 9:30.

"The Charlatan," by Ernest Pascal and Someone Else.—Quiver hokum. The usual sudden death with the usual dilatory solution.

"The Shadow," by Eden Phillpotts.—Some persons admire the writings of Phillpotts. Some persons admire brown socks with white feet. In bed at 9:45.

"Creditors," by August Strindberg.—Gustav's wife carries on with Adolph. Gustav enraged, divorces her. Adolph marries her. Presently Adolph goes away. Gustav returns. Gustav re-inflames his ex-wife. Adolph is seized with epilepsy. Adolph dies. Gustav, avenged, issues a chuckle. A great play for a May evening!

"La Rafale," by Henri Bernstein.—Another of Bernstein's dramatizations of sex in terms of dynamite. Left at 9:47 to confer with Bishop Manning on

audible code calling in shipbuilding plants and audible electric signals in industrial plants.

"Bronx Express," by Ossip Dymov.—A Yiddish localization of Apel's "Hans Stonnenstösser" with overtones of Gates' "Poor Little Rich Girl," the whole succumbing to an inferior imagination.

"The Night Call," by Adeline Hendricks.—Quiver hokum minus the quiver. In bed at 9:35.

"Partners Again," by Montague Glass and Jules E. Goodman.—Potash and Perlmutter wearing pretty thin.

"What The Public Wants," by Arnold Bennett.—A talented writer's second worst.

"The Advertising of Kate," by Annie Nathan Meyer.—Are business women people? "This is a man's world." "Woman's career should be love and home and kiddies." Etc. In bed at 9:50.

"Go Easy, Mabel," a musical comedy.—The plot: Wife indifferent; husband arouses her jealousy; love again triumphant. The lyrics: "When the world is full of clouds, smile, smile, smile." The name of the comic stenographer: Mabel Montmorency. In bed at 10:15.

"The Red Geranium," by Ruth M. Woodward.—Another play about Greenwich Village. The sweet one comes to the Village from Medford, Mass., and is seduced by the Village Lothario. Let us pause to wipe away a tear.

"Fanny Hawthorne," by Stanley Houghton.—"Hindle Wakes" under a new title. A rusty play. Fanny's once shocking speech has long since taken its place with Nora's door-slamming, the movie called "The White Slave Traffic Exposed," the picture of "September Morn," and ladies' drawers.

"Kempy," by J. C. and E. Nugent.—An attempt at a legitimate comedy by two vaudeville actors. One amusing character.

Curtain.



Saving the World

By H. L. Mencken

I

WHEN the history of the late years in America is written, I suspect that their grandest, gaudiest gifts to *Kultur* will be found in the incomparable twins: the right-thinker and the forward-looker. No other nation can match them, at any weight. The right-thinker is privy to all God's wishes, and even whims; the forward-looker is the heir to all His promises to the righteous. The former is never wrong; the latter is never despairing. Sometimes the two are amalgamated into one man, and we have a Wilson, a Harding, a Dr. Frank Crane. But more often there is a division: the forward-looker thinks wrong, and the right-thinker looks backward. I give you Upton Sinclair and Nicholas Murray Butler as examples. Butler is an absolute masterpiece of correct thought: in his whole life, so far as human records show, he has not cherished a single fancy that might not have been voiced by a Fifth Avenue rector or spread upon the editorial page of the *New York Times*. But he has no vision, alas, alas! All the revolutionary inventions for lifting up humanity leave him cold. He is against them all, from the initiative and referendum to birth control, and from Fletcherism to osteopathy. Now turn to Sinclair. He believes in every one of them, however daring and fantoddish; he grasps and gobbles all the new ones the instant they are announced. But the man simply cannot think right. He is wrong on politics, on economics, and on theology. He glories in and is intensely vain of

his wrongness. Let but a new article of correct thought get itself stated by the constituted ecclesiastical and secular authorities—by Bishop Manning, or Judge Gary, or Butler, or Adolph Ochs, or Dr. Fabian Franklin, or Otto Kahn, or Dr. Stephen S. Wise, or Roger W. Babson, or any other such inspired omphalist—and he is against it almost before it is stated.

On the whole, I prefer the forward-looker to the right-thinker, if only because he shows more courage and originality. It takes nothing save lack of humor to believe what Butler, or Ochs, or Bishop Manning believes, but it takes long practise and a considerable natural gift to get down the beliefs of Sinclair. I remember with great joy the magazine that he used to print during the war. In the very first issue he advocated Socialism, the single tax, birth control, communism, the League of Nations, the conscription of wealth, government ownership of coal mines, sex hygiene and free trade. In the next issue he added the recall of judges, Fletcherism, the Gary system, the Montessori method, paper-bag cookery, war gardens and the budget system. In the third he came out for sex hygiene, one big union, the initiative and referendum, the city manager plan, chiropractic and Esperanto. In the fourth he went to the direct primary, fasting, the Third International, a federal divorce law, free motherhood, hot lunches for school children, Prohibition, the vice crusade, *Expressionismus*, the government control of newspapers, deep breathing, international courts, the Fourteen Points, freedom for the Armenians, the limita-

tion of campaign expenditures, the merit system, the abolition of the New York Stock Exchange, psychoanalysis, crystal-gazing, the Little Theatre movement, the recognition of Mexico, *vers libre*, old age pensions, unemployment insurance, co-operative stores, the endowment of motherhood, the Americanization of the immigrant, mental telepathy, the abolition of grade crossings, federal labor exchanges, profit-sharing in industry, a prohibitive tax on Poms, the clean-up-paint-up campaign, relief for the Jews, osteopathy, mental mastery, and the twilight sleep. And so on, and so on. Once I had got into the swing of the Sinclair monthly I found that I could dispense with at least twenty other journals of the uplift. When he abandoned it I had to subscribe for them anew, and the gravel has stuck in my craw ever since.

In his new book, "The Book of Life: Mind and Body" (*published by the author*) he is estopped from displaying whole categories of his ideas, for his subject is not man the political and economic machine, but man the mammal. Nevertheless, his characteristic hospitality to new revelations is still abundantly visible. What does the mind suggest? The mind suggests its protean and fascinating powers, some of them very recent. There is, for example, psychoanalysis. There is mental telepathy. There is crystal-gazing. There is double personality. Out of each springs a scheme for the uplift of the race—in each there is something for a forward-looker to get his teeth into. And if mind, then why not also spirit? Here even a forward-looker may hesitate; here, in fact, Sinclair himself hesitates. The whole field of spiritism is barred to him by his theological heterodoxy; if he admits that man has an immortal soul, he may also have to admit that the soul can suffer in hell. Thus even forward-looking may turn upon and devour itself. But if the meadow wherein spooks and poltergeists disport is closed, it is at least possible to peep over the fence. Sinclair sees materializations under red, satanic

lights. He is, perhaps, not yet convinced, but he is looking pretty hard. Let a ghostly hand reach out and tickle him, and he will be over the fence! The body is easier. The new inventions for dealing with it are innumerable and irresistible: no forward-looker can fail to succumb to at least some of them. Sinclair teeters dizzily. On the one hand he stoutly defends surgery—that is, provided the patient is allowed to make his own diagnosis!—; on the other hand he is hot for fasting, teetotalism, and the avoidance of drugs, coffee and tobacco, and he begins to flirt with osteopathy and chiropractic. More, he has discovered a new revelation in San Francisco—a system of diagnosis and therapeutics, still hooted at by the Medical Trust, whereby the exact location of a cancer may be determined by examining a few drops of the patient's blood, and syphilis may be cured by vibrations, and whereby, most curious of all, it can be established that odd numbers, written on a sheet of paper, are full of negative electricity, and even numbers are full of positive electricity.

II

I LEAVE the book to your inspection. It is written with great confidence and address, and has a good deal of shrewdness mixed with its credulities; few licensed medical practitioners could give you better advice. But it is less interesting than its author, or, indeed, than forward-lookers in general. Of all the known orders of men they fascinate me the most. I spend whole days reading their pronunciamientos, and am an expert in the ebb and flow of their singularly bizarre ideas. As I have said, I have never encountered one who believed in but one sure cure for all the sorrows of the world, and let it go at that. Nay, even the most timorous of them gives his full faith and credit to at least two. Turn, for example, to the official list of eminent single taxers issued by the Joseph Fels Fund. I defy you to find one solitary man on it who stops with the single tax. There

is David Starr Jordan: he is also one of the great whales of pacifism. There is B. O. Flower: he is the emperor of anti-vaccinationists. There is Carrie Chapman Catt: she is hot for every peruna that the suffragettes brew. There is W. S. U'Ren: he is in general practise as a messiah. There is Hamlin Garland: he also chases spooks. There is Jane Addams: vice crusader, pacifist, suffragist, settlement worker. There is Prof. Dr. Scott Nearing: Socialist and martyr. There is Newt Baker: heir of the Wilsonian idealism. There is Gifford Pinchot: conservationist, Prohibitionist, professional Good Citizen. There is Judge Ben B. Lindsey: forward-looking's Jack Horner, forever sticking his thumb into new pies. I could run the list to columns, but no need. You know the type as well as I do. Give the forward looker the direct primary, and he demands the short ballot. Give him the initiative and referendum, and he bawls for the recall of judges. Give him Christian Science, and he proceeds to the swamis and yogis. Give him the Mann Act, and he wants laws providing for the castration of fornicators. Give him Prohibition, and he launches a new crusade against cigarettes, coffee, jazz, and custard pies.

I have a wide acquaintance among such sad, mad, glad folks, and know some of them very well. It is my belief that the majority of them are absolutely honest—that they believe as fully in their baroque gospels as I believe in the dishonesty of politicians—that their myriad and amazing faiths sit upon them as heavily as the fear of hell sits upon a Methodist deacon who has degraded the vestry-room to carnal uses. All that may be justly said against them is that they are chronically full of hope, and hence chronically uneasy and indignant—that they belong to the less sinful and comfortable of the two grand divisions of the human race. Call them the tender-minded, as the late William James used to do, and you have pretty well described them. They are, on the one hand, pathologically sensitive to the sorrows of the world, and, on the other

hand, pathologically susceptible to the eloquence of quacks. What seems to lie in all of them is the doctrine that evils so vast as those they see about them *must* and *will* be laid—that it would be an insult to a just God to think of them as permanent and irremediable. This notion, I believe, is at the bottom of much of the current pathetic faith in Prohibition. The thing itself is obviously a colossal failure—that is, when viewed calmly and realistically. It has not only not cured the rum evil in the United States; it has plainly made that evil five times as bad as it ever was before. But to confess the bald fact would be to break the forward-looking heart: it simply refuses to harbor the concept of the incurable. And so, being debarred by the legal machinery that supports Prohibition from going back to any more feasible scheme of relief, it cherishes the sorry faith that somehow, in some vague and incomprehensible way, Prohibition will yet work. When the truth becomes so horribly evident that even forward-lookers are daunted, then some new quack will arise to fool them again, with some new and worse scheme of super-Prohibition. It is their destiny to wobble thus endlessly between quack and quack. One pulls them by the right arm and one by the left arm. A third is at their coat-tail pockets, and a fourth beckons them over the hill.

The rest of us are less tender-minded and, in consequence, much happier. We observe quite clearly that the world, as it stands, is anything but perfect—that injustice exists, and turmoil, and tragedy, and bitter suffering of ten thousand kinds—that human life, at its best, is anything but a grand, sweet song. But instead of ranting absurdly against the fact, or weeping over it maudlinly, or trying to remedy it with inadequate means, we simply put the thought of it out of our minds as much as possible, just as a wise man puts away the thought that alcohol is probably bad for his liver, or that his wife is a shade too fat. Instead of mulling over it and suffering from it, we seek contentment

by pursuing the delights that are so strangely mixed with the horrors—by seeking out the soft spots and endeavoring to avoid the hard spots. Such is the intelligent habit of practical and sinful men, and under it lies a sound philosophy. After all, the world is not our handiwork, and we are not responsible for what goes on in it, save within very narrow limits. Going outside them with our protests and advice tends to become contumacy to the celestial hierarchy. Do the poor suffer in the midst of plenty? Then let us thank God politely that we are not that poor. Are rogues in office? Well, go call a policeman, thus setting rogue upon rogue. Are taxes onerous, wasteful, unjust? Then let us dodge as large a part of them as we can. Are whole regiments and army corps of our fellow creatures doomed to hell? Then let them complain to the archangels, and, if the archangels are too busy to hear them, to the nearest archbishop.

Unluckily for the man of tender mind, he is quite incapable of any such easy dismissal of the great plagues and conundrums of existence. It is of the essence of his character that he is too sensitive and sentimental to put them ruthlessly out of his mind: he cannot view even the crunching of a cockroach without feeling the snapping of his own ribs. And it is of the essence of his character that he is unable to escape the delusion of duty—that he can't rid himself of the notion that, whenever he observes anything in the world that might conceivably be improved, he is commanded by God to make every effort to improve it. In brief, he is a public-spirited man, and the ideal citizen of democratic states. But Nature, it must be obvious, is opposed to democracy—and whoso goes counter to nature must expect to pay the penalty. The tender-minded man pays it by hanging forever upon the cruel hooks of hope, and by fermenting inwardly in incessant indignation. All this, perhaps, explains the notorious ill-humor of uplifters—the wowser touch that is in even the best of them. They

dwell so much upon the imperfections of the universe and the weaknesses of man that they end by believing that the universe is altogether out of joint and that every man is a scoundrel and every woman a vampire. Years ago I had a combat with certain eminent reformers of the sex-hygiene and vice crusading species, and got out of it a memorable illumination of their private minds. The reform these strange creatures were then advocating was directed against sins of the seventh category, and they proposed to put them down by forcing through legislation of a very harsh and fantastic kind—statutes forbidding any woman, however forbidding, to entertain a man in her apartment without the presence of a third party, statutes providing for the garish lighting of all dark places in the public parks, and so on. In the course of the debate with them I gradually jockeyed the proponents of these laws into abandoning all of the arguments they started with, and so brought them down to their fundamental doctrine, to wit, that no woman, without the aid of the police, could be trusted to protect her own virtue. I pass as a cynic in Christian circles, but this notion certainly gave me pause. And it was voiced by men who were the fathers of grown and unmarried daughters!

It is no wonder that men who cherish such ideas are so ready to accept any remedy for the underlying evils, no matter how grotesque. A man suffering from hay-fever, as everyone knows, will take any medicine that is offered to him, even though he knows the compounder to be a quack; the infinitesimal chance that the quack may have the impossible cure gives him a certain hope, and so makes the disease itself more bearable. In precisely the same way a man suffering from the conviction that the whole universe is hell-bent for destruction—that the government he lives under is intolerably evil, that the rich are growing richer and the poor poorer, that no man's word can be trusted and no woman's chastity, that another and worse war is hatching, that the very

regulation of the weather has fallen into the hands of rogues—such a man will grab at anything, even birth control, osteopathy or the Fourteen Points, rather than let the foul villainy go on. The apparent necessity of finding a remedy without delay transforms itself, by an easy psychological process, into a belief that the remedy has been found; it is almost impossible for most men, and particularly for tender-minded men, to take in the concept of the insoluble. Every problem that remains unsolved, including even the problem of evil, is in that state simply because men of strict virtue and passionate altruism have not combined to solve it—because the business has been neglected by human laziness and rascality. All that is needed to dispatch it is the united effort of enough pure hearts; the accursed nature of things will yield inevitably to a sufficiently desperate battle; mind (usually written *Mind*) will triumph over matter (usually written *Matter*—or maybe *Money Power*, or *Land Monopoly*, or *Beef Trust*, or *Conspiracy of Silence*, or *Commercialized Vice*, or *Wall Street*, or the *Dukes*, or the *Kaiser*), and the Kingdom of God will be at hand. So, with the will to believe in full function, the rest is easy. The eager forward-looker is exactly like the man with hay-fever, or arthritis, or nervous dyspepsia, or diabetes. It takes time to try each successive remedy—to search it out, to take it, to observe its effects, to hope, to doubt, to shelve it. Before the process is completed another is offered; new ones are always waiting before their predecessors have been discarded. Here, perhaps, we get a glimpse of the causes behind the protean appetite of the true forward-looker—his virtuosity in credulity. He is in all stages simultaneously—just getting over the initiative and referendum, beginning to have doubts about the short ballot, making ready for a horse doctor's dose of the single tax, and contemplating an experimental draught of Socialism tomorrow.

What is to be done for him? How

is he to be cured of his great thirst for sure-cures that do not cure, and converted into a contented and careless backward-looker, peacefully snoozing beneath his fig tree while the oppressed bawl for succor in forty abandoned lands, and injustice stalks the world, and taxes mount higher and higher, and poor working-girls are sold into white slavery, and Prohibition fails to prohibit, and cocaine is hawked openly, and jazz drags millions down the primrose way, and the trusts own the legislatures of all Christendom, and judges go to dinner with millionaires, and Europe prepares for another war, and children of four and five years work as stevedores and locomotive firemen, and guinea pigs and dogs are vivisected, and Polish immigrant women have more children every year, and divorces multiply, and materialism rages, and the devil runs the cosmos? What is to be done to save the forward-looker from his torturing indignations, and set him in paths of happy dalliance? Answer: nothing. He was born that way, as men are born with hare lips or bad livers, and he will remain that way until the angels summon him to eternal rest. Destiny has laid upon him the burden of seeing unescapably what had better not be looked at, of believing inevitably what isn't so. There is no way to help him. He must suffer vicariously for the carnal ease of the rest of us. He must die daily that we may live in peace, corrupt and contented.

III

I FIND myself, after incessant prayer and soul-searching, still unable to find anything in the work of D. H. Lawrence save a florid childishness. Certainly his book on the Freudian revelation, "Psychology and the Unconscious," must be reckoned among the masterpieces of piffle: not even "The New Freedom" or the late volume of the Hon. Cal Coolidge surpasses it. The vogue of his novels among the newly intellectual, I am convinced, is largely due to the fact that they deal rather

gaudily with sex; if the women in them were more careful they would be hymned less ecstatically in Greenwich Village. The same equivocal acclaim pursues many far better men: among them, James Joyce, Dreiser, Cabell and Sherwood Anderson. I believe that it has done great damage to Dreiser, if only by convincing him that depicting the obvious pawings and snufflings of human courtship is a noble and difficult art, and that those persons who esteem it are mellow aesthetes and advanced thinkers—worse, that those who laugh at it are all Methodists at heart, and probably secret contributors to the Comstock Society. In point of fact Dreiser's dealings with sex are usually extraordinarily inept and banal, and there is more sagacious discourse upon the subject on one page of even so slender a treatise as my "In Defense of Women" than there is in the whole canon of his works. Dreiser really deserves respect for far different reasons. He has an almost magical faculty for giving poignant reality to the inner life of certain elemental types of humanity. His very failings as a stylist help him here; done into the sleek, gurgling phrases of Pater his books would lose half their effectiveness. He will be remembered, not for the trivial carnalities described in "The 'Genius'," but for the astounding story of Hurstwood's decay, the dazzling analysis of Cowperwood's soul, the unforgettable pictures of Muldoon, old Gerhardt, Jennie, and the author's brother, Paul Dresser. In this department he is absolutely without a rival in our letters; as a sexual anatomist and physiologist he is exceeded by scores.

Cabell and Anderson are cursed by the same sort of mistaken admiration. Until Anderson depicted an old maid perambulating her front lawn in the dead of night, stark naked and defying God, he attracted little notice from the Freudian sisters; since then he has been one of their heroes. But that "Nude Descending the Ladder to Hell" is certainly not one of his best pieces; put beside "I Want to Know," or "Un-

lighted Lamps" or the story printed in the *Dial* last February (I forget its title), it is trivial and obvious. So with Cabell. He has himself shrunk from the factitious celebrity of "Jurgen." The book is very fine stuff, but certainly not because there happen to be a few passages in it that arrest the Comstocks and enchant the women's clubs and finishing schools. Cabell was an artist of sound abilities and high achievements long before "Jurgen" was put on paper. The folks who admired him then still admire him. He is not aided, nor is he flattered, by the additional admiration of the imbeciles who have since set up a gabbling about him. Of all the contemporary American novelists of the first rank, only Miss Cather has escaped that disconcerting pawing. Those who are intelligent enough to admire "My Antonia" admire it simply because it is a very beautiful piece of work, and not because there is anything in it that can be distorted into support for the imbecilities of Greenwich Village. If Dreiser were shrewd he would write a novel devoid of fornication, and so get rid of whole army corps of his customers. Cabell has done it, and plainly feels the better for it.

Having said so much, I hope I shall not be accused of confusing Lawrence and the *chatouilleurs* who whoop for him so raucously. They are idiots, but even idiots occasionally applaud a sound artist. Not, however, in this case. I can find no more sense or plausibility in "Aaron's Rod" than I found in "The Lost Girl." Both are infinitely profound in tone, and infinitely hollow in content. A great nose-blowing, grunting and eye-rolling about nothing. At the primary business of a novelist it seems to me that he fails: he cannot make me believe in his characters. Now and then, of course, they interest me vaguely, but I never find myself assuming that they are real. They look to me to be simply a set of marionettes for discharging the ideas of their creator—and the ideas of their creator, in so far as I can comprehend them at all, strike me as extremely dubious. A few months ago, so the

papers say, "A Lost Girl" was awarded a prize in England as the best novel of the year. Well, we can match that in America. On the Tuesday following the first Monday of November, 1920, Warren Gamaliel Harding, of Marion, Ohio, was elected President of the United States.

IV

Brief Notices

THE ENORMOUS ROOM, by E. E. Cummings (*Boni*). The story of an altruistic young American who went to France to help the French defend the Bal Bullier against German barbarism, and who was jailed by the grateful Frogs for his pains, and came near perishing in filthy dungeons. A tale not without its humors, but made extremely tedious by the highly labored and sophomoric style of the author.

CALVARY, by Octave Mirbeau (*Lieber*). A belated translation of "Le Calvaire," by the celebrated French boob-shocker, first published in 1886.

TRUTH ABOUT THE JEWS, by Walter Hurt (*Horton*). The usual sentimental blather. Far more accurate and intelligent stuff is to be found in a book by a Jew: "The Jews," by Dr. M. Fishberg.

MY LIFE OF SONG, by Mme. Tetrassini (*Dorrance*). The standard model *diva's* autobiography, ending with a hint that her late farewell tour will probably have successors.

PETER WHIFFLE, by Carl Van Vechten (*Knopf*). A rambling puckish piece, somewhat in the manner of Aldous Huxley's "Chrome Yellow." It has entertained me vastly, and I recommend it heartily.

A VIRGIN HEART, by Remy de Gourmont (*Brown*). Proof anew that a good critic is not always a good novelist. Translated by Aldous Huxley.

MR. PROHACK, by Arnold Bennett (*Doran*). A novel of Bennett's second line, suave, workmanlike and amusing, but not to be mentioned in the same breath with "The Old Wives' Tale," "Clayhanger" or "The Pretty Lady."

LETTERS FROM LITHOPOLIS, from O. Henry to Mabel Wagnalls (*Doubleday*). Another sugar-teat for admirers of the late O. Henry, privately printed, expensive and banal.

THE POCKET CHESTERFIELD, edited by Gordon Dorrance (*Dorrance*). A charming reprint of an old edition of Chesterfield's letters, published in Philadelphia in 1806.

BILL JOHNSTON'S JOY-BOOK, edited by William T. Johnson (*Stewart*). An encyclopedia of all the worst wheezes ever heard of, solemnly classified and numbered, and bound in decorous cloth.

MR. ANTIPHILLOS, SATYR, by Remy de Gourmont (*Lieber*). A competent translation by John Howard, with an excellent introduction by Jack Lewis.

THE LINEAGE OF LICHFIELD, by James Branch Cabell (*McBride*). In which Cabell, pursuing the plan introduced into the revised edition of his works, shows the common descent of all his characters, medieval and modern, from Manuel the Redeemer, Count of Poictesme. A curious conceit, ingeniously carried out. At the end a bogus valedictory by the author. He will rise again!

FREE SPEECH BIBLIOGRAPHY, by Theodore Schroeder (*Wilson*). A useful collection, but one marred by many unaccountable omissions. For example, there is no mention of "Jurgen" in the list of books suppressed.

FRIDAY NIGHTS, by Edward Garnett (*Knopf*). Very uneven literary essays. Garnett admires Joseph Conrad, Tchekov, Robert Frost, D. H. Lawrence and O. Henry—surely a singular stew! His essays on contemporary American literature are worthless, chiefly because his acquaintance with it is limited. But he writes very intelligently about Stephen Crane.

ADVENTURES IN ANGLING, by Van Campen Heilner (*Stewart*). Chapters from the career of one of the most diligent and daring of American fishermen—not a wader in mountain brooks, but a hunter of swordfish, tuna, dolphin, sawfish and other such monsters. Every story is very well told.

WAR SHADOWS, by Lucy Robins (*Labor Bodies Press*). A long and somewhat garrulous account of the effort made to get a pardon for Eugene Debs and the other political prisoners. Sentimentality mars it, but it constitutes a valuable record nevertheless.

THE IMMIGRANT PRESS AND ITS CONTROL, by Robert E. Parks (*Harper*). Another ponderous document of the Americanization movement. It amasses a great many interesting facts about the foreign-language press in the United States, but the author's attitude of mind is scarcely to be distinguished from that of the *New York Times*.



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